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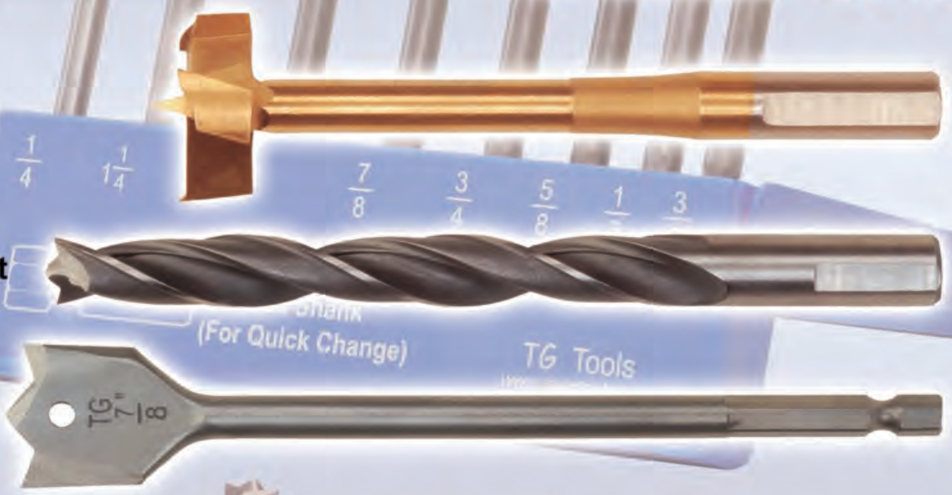

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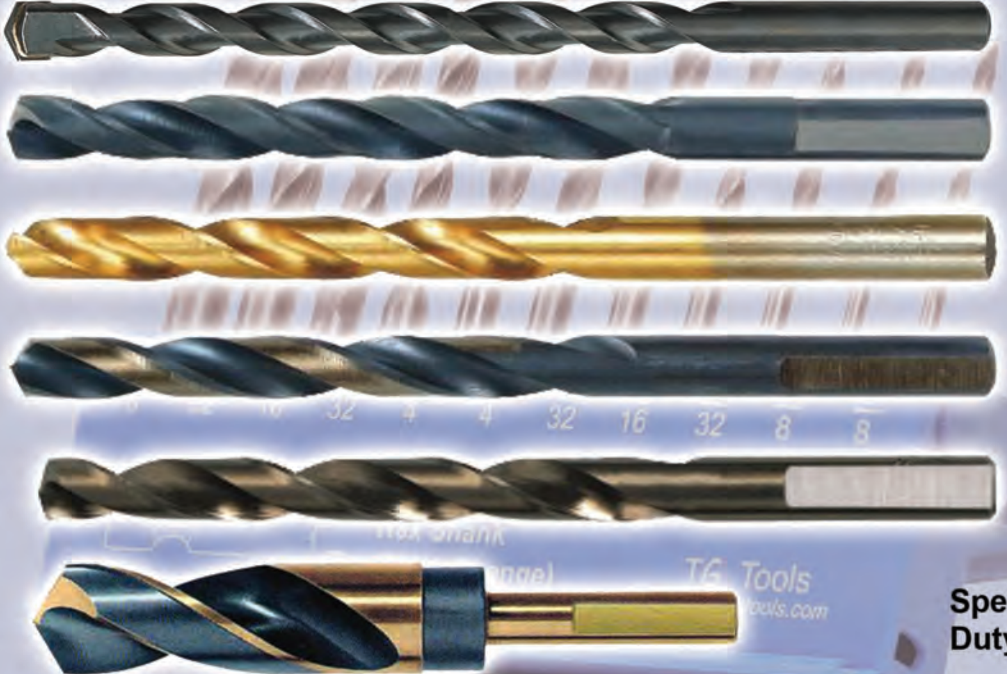

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What You Need To Know About Dust Containment

Safety concerns are making dust containment a huge issue for those who work with power hand tools. The airborne particles created by sawing, sanding and grinding of concrete, stone, drywall, wood and fiberglass pose a serious health risk. OSHA has implemented guidelines to protect workers from exposure to silica[1] and Hexavalent chromium[2]. A recent NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation found that drywall sanders were exposed to as much as 10 times the permissible exposure limit set by OSHA.

Everyone is scrambling for a solution. OSHA is developing new guidelines. Some insurance companies have actually dropped coverage because of the immeasurable legal exposure. Dust masks help, but the industry has found a better solution in point-of-origin dust containment systems.

One company, Dustless Technologies, has developed line of solutions around a patented vacuum design. The system includes a variety of muzzles/shrouds designed to fit a wide array of tools including hand grinders, worm-drive saws, high-speed saws and core drills. There is also a pole-mounted dry wall sander and paint scraper.

Originally developed for the purpose of cleaning ash out of fireplaces, the Dustless Wet/Dry vacuum is uniquely capable of capturing the extremely fine dust created by

Not All Vacuum Systems Are Created Equal!

Dustless WET DRY

Features	Dustless System	Other System
Ability to change between wet and dry vacuuming without stopping to change filters.	✔	
Patented filtration system enables cleaning of internal filters without opening the unit to keep dust inside the canister.	✔	
Patented filtration system designed specifically to contain extremely fine dust from dry wall and concrete cutting.	✔	
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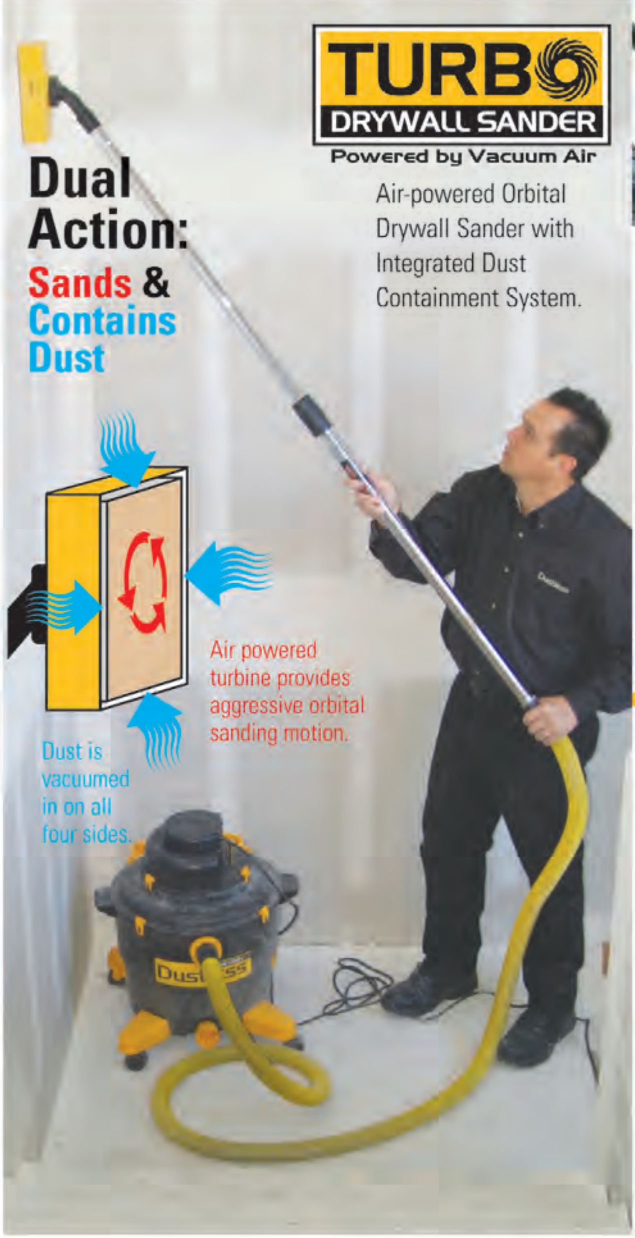
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sanding, sawing and grinding. Traditional shop vacs "cough" out a cloud of dust when you turn them on if they're filled with something like drywall dust. Additionally, you have to open up the unit to clean the filter, allowing more dust to escape into the work environment. Not so with the Dustless system.

The patented dual filtration system enables you to clean the primary filter with an agitator rod without opening the unit. An optional micro-prefilter provides an extra five layers of filtration to capture airborne particles down to .5 microns. For the ultimate in dust containment, there is also an optional HEPA filter that captures particles down to .3 microns.

In addition to safety issues, contractors have discovered tremendous time-saving benefits from eliminating clean up. Darren Diess, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Dustless said, "Contractors save a lot of time and money with our system. Consider the mess created by drywall sanding... Now eliminate it - and all the work that goes with it. Our system is also priced to be within reach of the smallest contractor or do-it-yourselfer. Professional-grade dust collection systems cost typically more than a thousand dollars, whereas our systems start for less than $400."

[2] Industrial uses of hexavalent chromium compounds include chromate pigments in dyes, paints, inks, and plastics; chromates added as anticorrosive agents to paints, primers, and other surface coatings; and chromic acid electroplated onto metal parts to provide a decorative or protective coating. Hexavalent chromium can also be formed when performing "hot work" such as welding on stainless steel or melting chromium metal.

[1] Materials including, but not limited to, concrete, brick, block, mortar, stone, rock and soil.

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- Fits most hand grinders

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- New design!

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2009 NASCAR® Nationwide® Series

DATE	RACE	TRACK - LOCATION
Saturday, April 4th	O'Reilly 300	Texas Motor Speedway - Fort Worth, TX
Friday, May 1st	Lipton Tea 250	Richmond International Raceway - Richmond, VA
Saturday, May 23rd	Carquest Auto Parts 300	Lowe's Motor Speedway - Charlotte, NC
Saturday, May 30th	Heluva Good! 200	Dover International Speedway - Dover, DE
Saturday, June 20th	Camping World RV Rentals 250	The Milwaukee - Milwaukee, WI
Saturday, July 25th	Kroger 200	O'Reilly Raceway Park - Indianapolis, IN
Saturday, August 1st	TBA	Iowa Speedway - Newton, IA
Friday, August 21st	Food City 250	Bristol Motor Speedway - Bristol, TN
Saturday, September 5th	Degree V12 300	Atlanta Motor Speedway - Atlanta, GA
Saturday, October 3rd	Kansas Lottery 300	Kansas Speedway - Kansas City, KS

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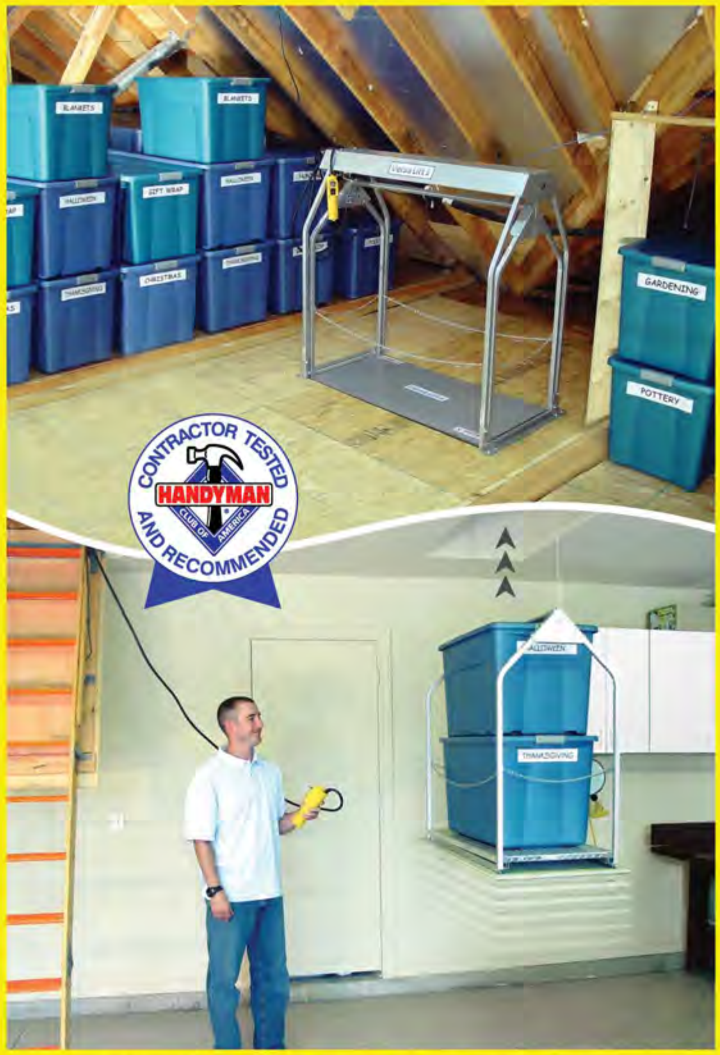

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LETTER

From The Editor-In-Chief

The *EHT* staff traveled to Las Vegas for the 2009 International Builder's Show (IBS), where we got a glimpse into the future of home-building technology. Constructed as a show home for the convention, the New American Home offers real-world demonstrations of the latest concepts in architecture and construction techniques.

Not surprisingly, the prevailing theme was energy efficiency. "This latest edition of the New American Home is built to be the most energy-efficient home in the history of this series," says Bill Nolan, chairman of The New American Home Task Force, which exhibits a new home annually at the IBS. "Anybody with an interest in housing construction will be fascinated by the natural gas-powered heating and cooling system, the photovoltaic cells and the solar water heating. Even the insulation in this home is exciting."

The site of the New American Home was chosen to optimize solar resources and to incorporate a landscape design that limits water and energy demand. To conserve materials and reduce waste, the builders used framing techniques such as pre-manufactured trusses and floor systems that didn't require additional on-site finish resources. The home was built primarily with recycled building materials, or materials manufactured from renewable resources.

The home features a proprietary gas-powered heating and cooling system with a SEER rating of 18. Other energy-efficient amenities include low-E windows, advanced insulation, vertical and horizontal solar overhangs and window louvers, as well as the installation of the 12,000+ kilohertz solar panel system. Insulated concrete forms (ICFs) were used for the basement and structural walls, which provide up to R-50 insulating values.

Based on the combined efforts of superior efficiency and on-site power generation, the whole package of energy-efficient products works together to make this a near zero-energy home. Let me repeat that: a Zero-energy home ... How's that for "green" living?

Somewhat ironically, given the global economic meltdown, the 2009 New American Home is a sprawling 8,721-square-foot palace of opulence, with four bedrooms and five baths, so it may not exactly reflect the stark reality of today's housing market. (Other posh highlights include whole-house automation, multiple HDTVs, a swimming pool, a huge outdoor living space and even a dog shower.)

Still, it's nice to see what the future holds—builders and designers that are innovating cutting-edge technologies that focus on conservation to better our homes, to better our lives and to better our environment.

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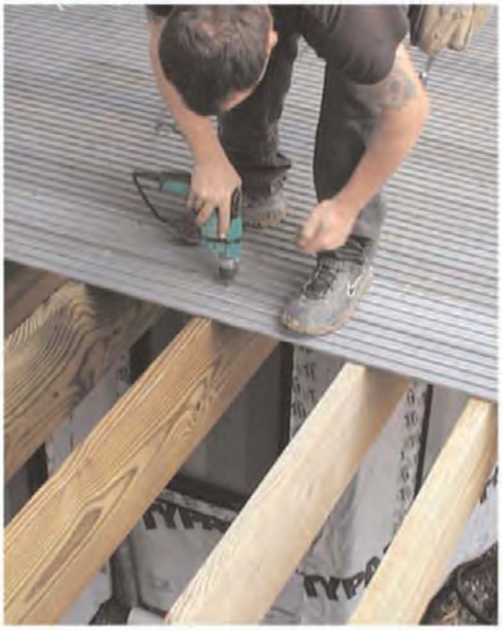

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Q&A Got a ?

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Q: *I purchased a new refrigerator and need to install a water line to the ice maker. How do I connect to the existing supply line?*

A: A water line for an ice maker is a 1/4- or 3/8-inch line that runs from the rear of the refrigerator to the nearest supply line, usually in the basement or under the sink. The connection to the existing supply line is made with a saddle valve. At many home stores, you can purchase an ice maker kit, which comes with the saddle valve, all the fittings and the water tubing (copper or plastic) necessary to make the connections. To install, first locate the fitting through which the tubing connects on the rear of the refrigerator. Using the fittings provided with the ice maker kit, take the tubing that came with your kit and connect it to the back of the ice maker unit. Next, locate a place on the main trunk supply line where you can tap the saddle valve. The location of your tap will determine how many holes you have to drill to feed the water line through. Once you've drilled the path, snake the ice maker line through the holes to the connection point. Connect the saddle valve to the main supply line according to the installation instructions that came with the kit. The valve is sold in pieces that bolt together to form a clamping device that straddles a water line like a saddle on a horse. No soldering is required to install the saddle valve. Saddle valves are self-tapping for connection with copper supply lines, in which case the connection can be made without shutting off the main water supply. However, if your supply pipe is galvanized steel, then you will have to shut off the water and drill a hole for the valve. Once installed, just connect the saddle valve to the ice maker tubing with the compression fittings that come with the kit. Make sure all connections are tight. Finally, turn on the water to the ice maker by turning the saddle valve's handle clockwise and then checking for leaks. If the refrigerator includes a water dispenser, you can test the connections immediately. Otherwise, the ice maker should start dispensing ice as soon as the water freezes.

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For Jobs on the Go

Five Portable Workstations Reviewed

Black & Decker's new 425 Workmate builds on a tradition of innovation.

By Matt Weber

Equally useful to the home-improvement DIY'er as well as the pro on the go, portable workstations offer convenience and practicality rolled into one easy-to-store package. The best portable workstations combine a sturdy work surface with a lightweight and compact mode of storage and transport.

Of course, bells and whistles are nice, too. One of the flagship workstations of the past few decades is the Black and Decker Workmate, invented in 1961 by Ron Hickman. As the story goes, Hickman had accidentally sawn a chair in half while using it as a saw stand, so he resolved to make an "extra hand." Despite the fact that Hickman was an accomplished inventor—it was Hickman who designed the famous Lotus Elan as chief engineer for the car company—many manufacturers reportedly turned up their nose at his workstation until Black and Decker took on exclusive rights in 1973. The rest is history, and it's still being written. Over the decades, millions upon millions of Workmates have been sold, with the original design evolving into a foldable space-saving workstation with table jaws that clamp like a vise, adjustable work height, adjustable table size and even vertical clamping.

The success of the Workmate has sparked the imaginations of many inventors since, and portable workstations are now available from a broad range of manufacturers and in a wide array of styles and designs. Here are five of the latest and greatest.

WORKMATE 425

I've had a baseline model of the Workmate floating around my shop for several years, and I found some very welcome advancements with the design of the new 425 model. For starters, when clamping the table jaws together, my old model requires the user to use both hands to turn the handles in tandem (in order to keep the jaws parallel). However, the new design offers a One-Handed Clamp system with a clever clutch design that enables the user to tighten the jaws with a single hand, or to adjust each side of the jaw independently for out-of-square clamping.

The 425 now clamps vertically.

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A removable center panel provides an extra work surface for large jobs, or for use as a tool stand for a miter saw, drill press, etc. Plus the front jaw now swings up for vertical clamping, which increases flexibility when clamping odd-shaped objects, and provides the necessary downward force to hold some large overhanging items securely to the table surface.

Plus, the tried and true features of the older versions remain with the 425, only more enhanced. The durable orange swivel pegs can be mounted in the table surface at various locations for a wide range of clamping applications, and the pegs are now larger with more gripping surface area than with my old Workmate. The table surface

Workmate 425
BLACK&DECKER

The Workmate 425 folds for easy storage.

Black & Decker's Portable Clamping Station weighs only 25 pounds.

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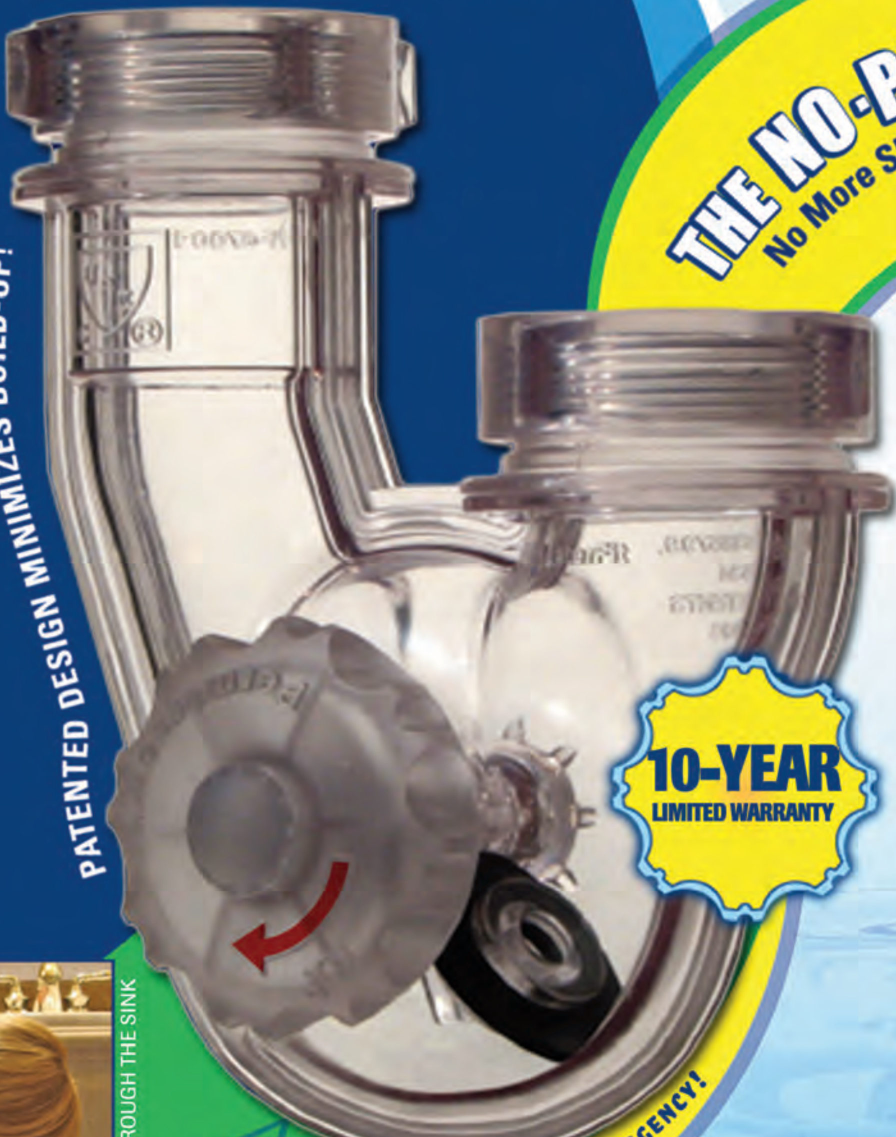

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The Clamping Station folds for suitcase-like portability.

includes a 180-degree angle gauge, as well as marked measurements in both metric and U.S. customary. The legs fold away for a lower operating height (when working with large work pieces), and the entire workstation folds down for easy storage. The heavyweight steel construction of the Workmate 425 supports up to 550 pounds with a 29-by-20-5/8-inch work surface. (www.blackanddecker.com)

Skil's versatile X-Bench supports 750 pounds.

BLACK & DECKER PORTABLE CLAMPING WORKSTATION

The first thing that struck me about this new feather in Black and Decker's cap was the suitcase-like portability of the bench. To open, just release a couple of latches in the table top, lift it up and the legs drop down and lock into place. Fold up the side supports, lock the center support in position, and the workstation is ready to go in seconds. It converts just as quickly back into "carrying case" mode with a thin 4-inch profile, weighing a super-light 25 pounds, including a convenient tote handle. The table includes two removable, adjustable clamps. The clamps can be set into recessed channels on the bench top and used for horizontal clamping. The clamps can also be used vertically by slipping them

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through the slots in the table top—or just clamp them to the edge of the table.

The bench supports up to 400 pounds and has a work surface measuring 33-1/4-by-21-1/2 inches. This new model from Black and Decker offers a unique amenity among the workstations reviewed in this article: storage shelves for tools. Lower shelves at the front and rear of the table provide almost two square feet of storage capacity each, for clamps, hammers, tape measures, pencils, drills or any other tool that'll fit. Both the Portable Clamping Station and the Workmate 425 offer a 2-year warranty. (www.blackanddecker.com)

The X-Bench serves as a stand for a drill press, jigsaw and more.

The X-Bench even doubles as a router table.

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SKIL X-BENCH

Another compact storage option is Skil's multi-faceted X-Bench. At roughly 45 pounds, it requires a little muscle to carry but offers a working surface of 53-by-23 inches with aluminum legs that adjust the table height from 24 to 34 inches (the Black and Decker models max at 30 inches). The X-Bench is also strong enough to support 750 pounds. The legs fold up and the table folds in half, revealing a carrying handle for portability and storage.

The X-Bench is chock full of features, including an innovative cut channel in the center of the bench. Two sections of the table can be pulled apart to expose the cut channel, which accommodates circular saws up to 7-1/4 inch. The MDF table top has peg holes to accept the two wedge dog clamps included with the table, which helps secure materials when using the cut channel. The table top includes ruler markings and a miter gauge slot.

The Trojan MS-2000 Miter Saw Stand provides 13' of support.

The MS-2000 easily folds for off-site portability.

With several optional accessories, the X-Bench can be expanded upon for a slew of applications. For example, the patented Skil Insert Plate System is available for jigsaws, routers and sanders. Using the tool insert plates, users can convert a section of the workstation into a scroll saw, router table or drill-press station.

Skil offers a clamping kit for securing material to the X-Bench that includes additional wedge dogs, spring clamps, horizontal clamps and a storage bag that attaches to the bench. A tail vise can be attached to the side of the X-Bench that allows users to clamp materials up to 5 inches thick. A downdraft table is also available to minimize dust when sanding. When hooked to a shop vac, the 2-1/2-inch vacuum port

The 10" tires can handle the roughest jobsite terrain.

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at the bottom of the table pulls sawdust through the small openings in the top of the downdraft table to keep the work area clean and orderly. (www.skil.com)

TROJAN MS-2000

Trojan Manufacturing offers a line of top-quality American-made work support products, from portable work centers and sawhorses to outfeed rollers and power tool stands. Trojan's new contractor-grade MS-2000 Miter Saw Stand is ideal for big jobs with oversized material, providing more than 13 feet of material support. The large 16-by-40-inch MDF table serves as a universal platform for virtually any model of miter saw—just bolt the saw to the table and adjust the height of the rollers and wings.

When set up for work, the MS-2000 is big, beefy and heavy, which is great for strength and stability. To compensate for the size and weight of the tool, the MS-2000 is cleverly designed so the wings and legs quickly fold beneath the table top and rest on two large pneumatic tires. The roller at the opposite end of the table from the tires doubles as a pull handle; simply tilt the table, grab the handle and roll it where you need to go. The 10-inch tires are among the largest I've seen on a portable workstation, which is a welcome amenity for outdoor, out-of-shop jobs where it's necessary to transport the saw stand across rough terrain. The MS-2000 features rugged steel construction (0.065 wall), galvanized rollers that won't rust, and a

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jaws and use its surface as the table top. The patented rubber jaws provide a string grip but are flexible enough to prevent marring delicate work pieces. Maybe you need to clamp an odd-shaped piece, like a log … Just attach on the accessory zinc-plated steel log jaws to grab it by the throat. Additionally, the tool's tripod design with an exceptionally wide leg stance provides excellent upright stability as a work support stand. And with only three legs, it's easy to stabilize the Jawhorse on uneven terrain.

The Jawhorse is an ideal tool for the lone worker who needs the third hand of a second person to do the job. The Jawhorse serves as that extra hand. It doesn't even require a hand to activate the clamping action—this is done with a foot pedal. With a hardened metal ratcheting system, the Jawhorse can achieve more than 1 ton of clamping force. It comes with a 3-year warranty and is constructed with an all-steel frame for years of rugged use. Thankfully there are no plastic parts to break or replace. With a 37-inch clamp capacity, the Jawhorse can hold doors, engine blocks, bench power tools and more. Plus, the legs fold up for compact storage, easily fitting into a closet or car. (www.rockwelltools.com) **EHT**

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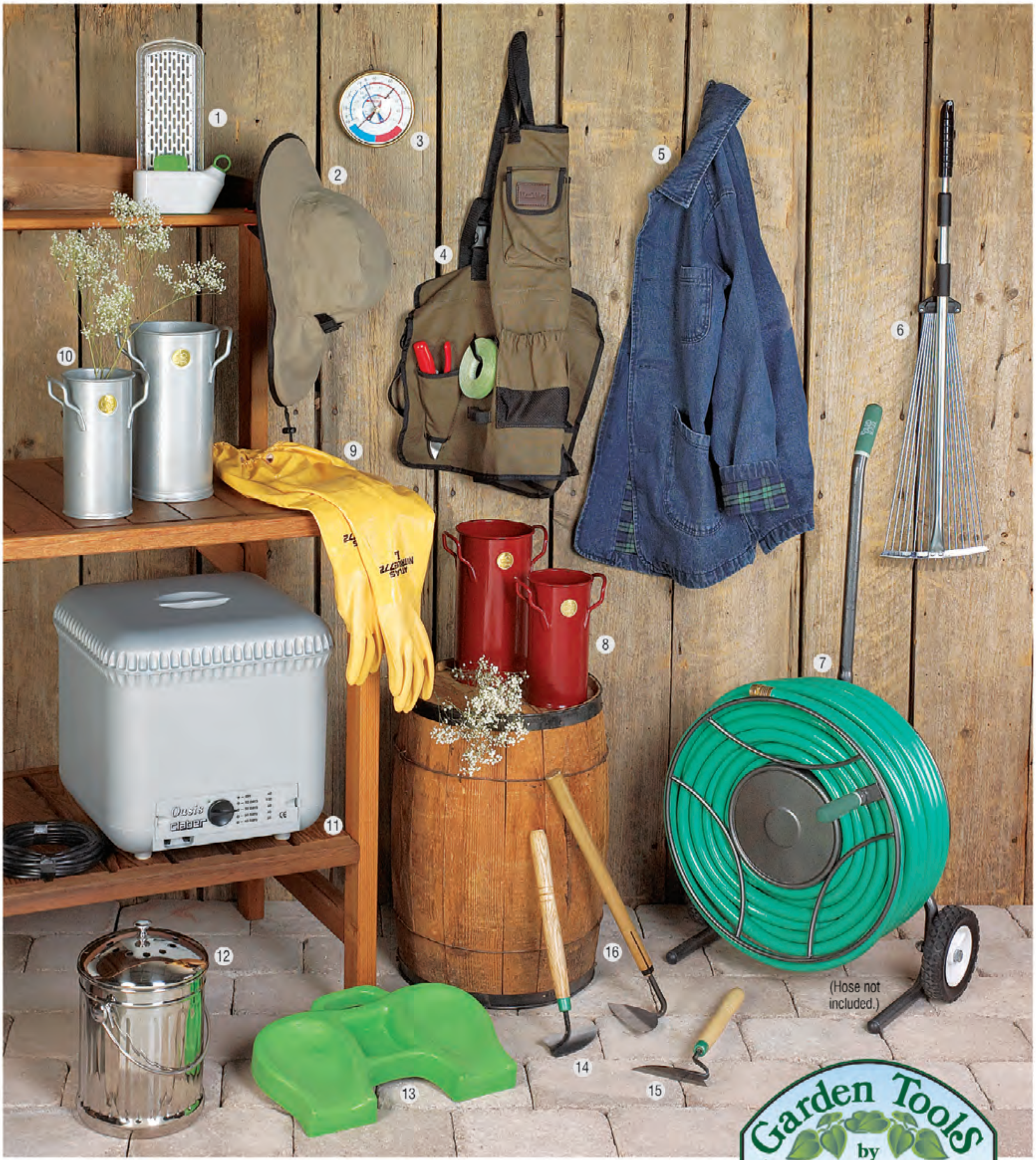

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Tiling Over Concrete

Tile a concrete patio for a decorative touch to your outdoor space.

By Jeanne Huber | Photos courtesy of Wayne Cable

Handmade clay tiles or stone tiles with naturally split surfaces look great in a garden setting. But accommodating the size variation requires a slightly different installation process than you'd use for the factory-made tiles that are more common indoors. This project originally appeared in *Walks, Walls & Patio Floors* by Jeanne Huber, published in 2008 by Sunset Books. The patio features handmade saltillo tiles, which are popular where winters are warm. They are too porous to survive a freezing winter. The procedure also applies to stone tile with slightly irregular dimensions. These saltillos were glazed at the factory. If you are using unglazed saltillos or porous stone, apply a sealer before you install them to prevent mortar stains.

Sort the tiles before you begin. Set aside warped pieces with a slight hump in the center until you have mortar prepared and can spread a little, like frosting, to make the backs flat. If thickness varies significantly, sort out the thicker pieces and include at least one in each section you set so that the paving turns out even.

Before tiling a concrete slab, be sure it is stable. Deep cracks are likely to show up in your tiled surface, even if you patch first. Run a straightedge along the surface and knock down any protrusions with a hammer and chisel or a grinder. Patch large holes, clean the concrete, let it dry, then paint the surface with concrete bonding adhesive.

Lay out the project. Check the slab to make sure corners are square. If not, draw two lines at a 90-degree angle to each other and make all your measurements from them. Do a test run by placing tiles to make a section about 3 feet square. Space them to allow grout lines of a width you want. Measure the width of the tiles plus one extra grout line. This is the size of the squares in which the tiles should be laid. Using a tape measure and chalk line, mark lines in both directions to produce a grid of squares.

Trowel on the mortar. Mix a batch of latex-reinforced mortar so it is just stiff enough to cling for a second or two to a trowel held vertically. Using a notched trowel of the size recommended by the tile dealer, spread the mortar inside one of the

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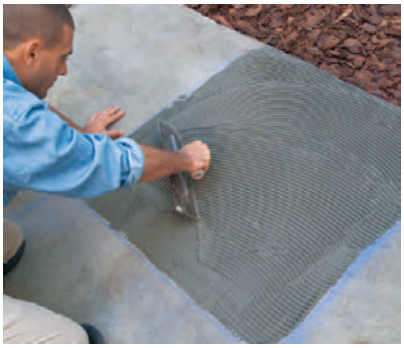

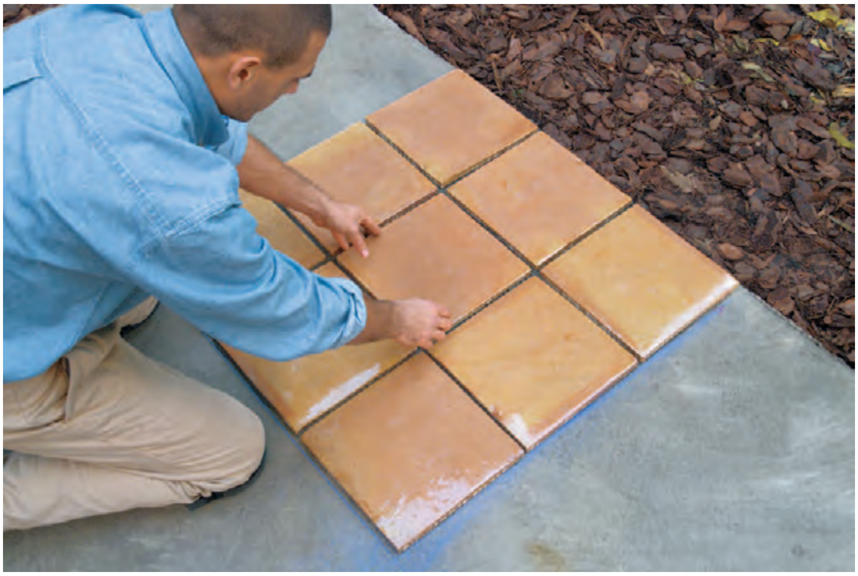

squares. First spread a thick layer using the flat side of the trowel. Then use the notched side to comb the mortar. Don't scrape down to the concrete.

Place and align the tiles. Fill the square with tiles, leaving gaps for grout lines. Set the tiles straight down into the mortar; don't slide them or press down on them. Stand up and examine the tiles from several angles to be sure the grout lines are as consistent and straight as possible.

Bed the tiles and check adhesion. Place a block of wood or a piece of plywood across several tiles and gently tap it to seat the pieces evenly. Every so often, pick up a tile to make sure the mortar is sticking to at

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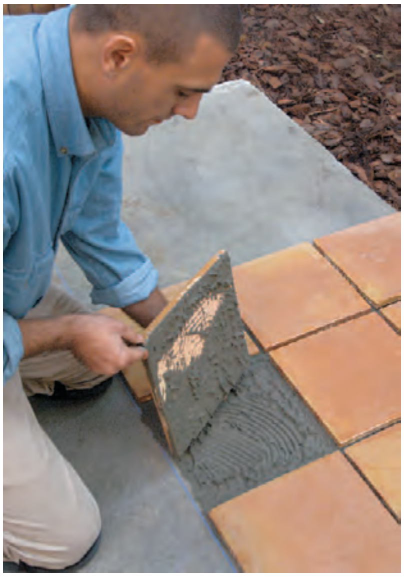
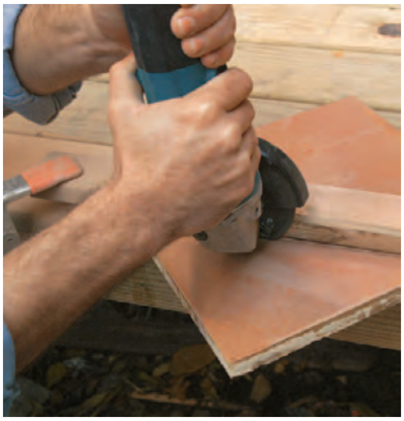
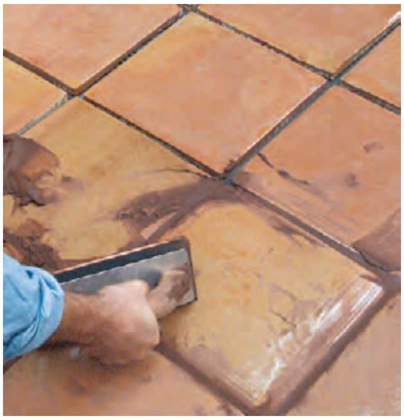


least three-quarters of the back surface. If it's not, back-butter each tile with a thin layer of mortar before setting it in the troweled mortar.

Cut tiles to fit. At edges, you may need to trim some pieces. Cut tiles using a rented wet saw, or a grinder or circular saw equipped with a masonry cutting blade or a diamond blade. Some tiles are easier to cut with a snap cutter. Ask your tile dealer which cutting tool to use.



Grout and clean. Wait about 2 days for the mortar to harden. Mix a batch of latex-reinforced sanded grout just to the point that it does not pour readily. If joints are 3⁄8 inch or wider, apply the grout with a mortar bag and shape the joints with a brick tool or the rounded end of a trowel handle.



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If joints are narrow, hold a laminated grout float nearly flat and push grout between the tiles in at least two directions. When the joints in an area are full, tilt the float up and use it to squeegee away most of the excess grout. Drag a wet towel over the area, then wipe lightly with a damp sponge, rinsed often. Once the grout starts to stiffen, use the sponge to shape the surface to a consistent depth. Allow the surface to dry until a white haze appears, then buff it away with a dry cloth. Mist the grout with water until damp and cover it with plastic for several days, making sure it stays damp. **EHT**

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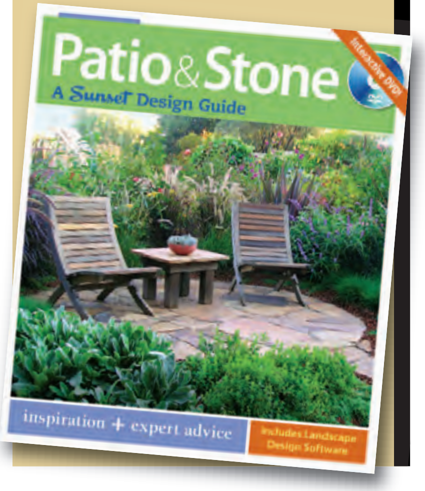
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WINDOW

By Larry Walton

RE-VIEW

Window Replacement Done Right

WINDOW RE-VIEW

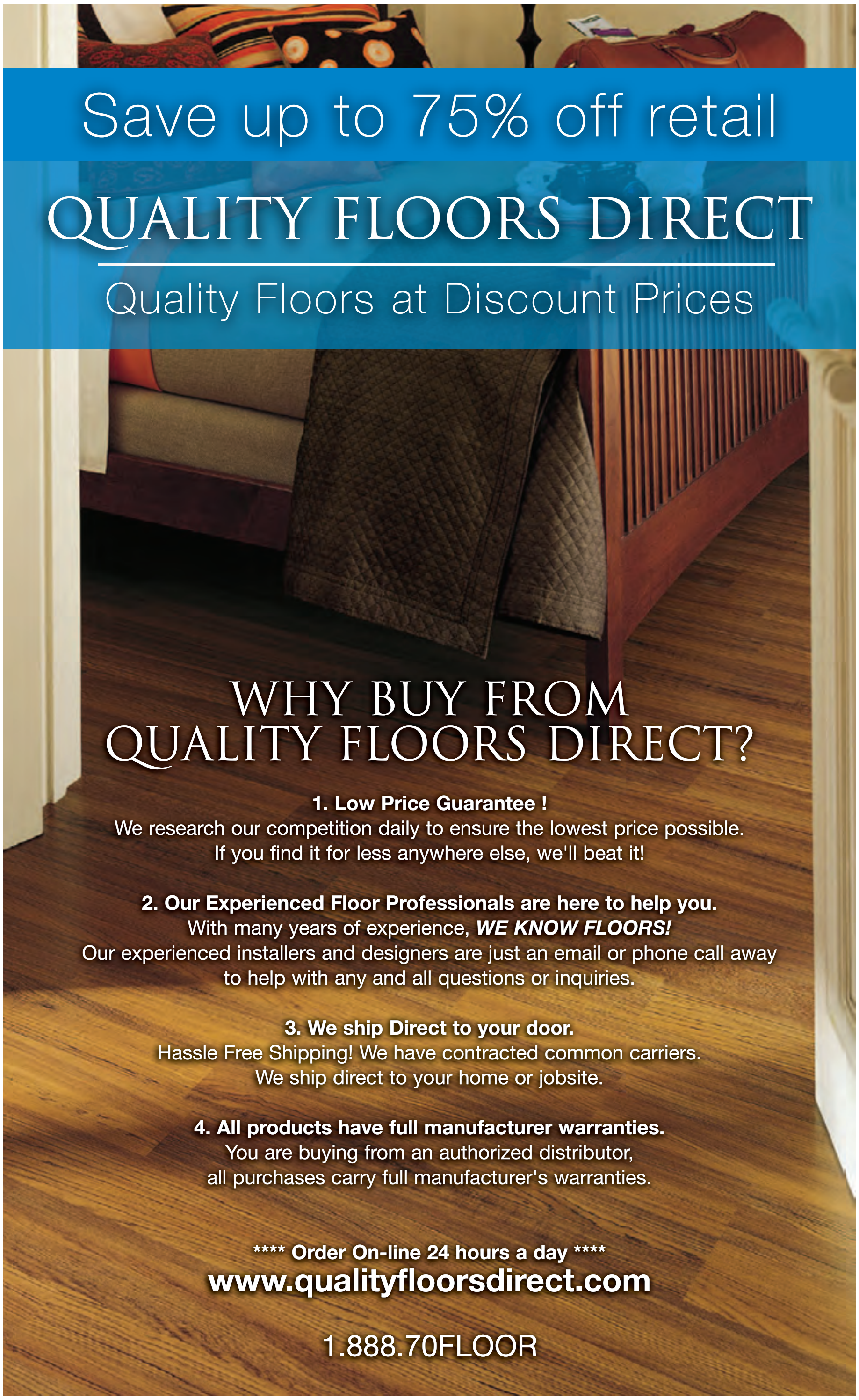
It was one of those rare occasions when everything in the house was quiet. No kids fighting, no TV, no booming stereo, which explains why I could hear an ominous noise. It was our first winter in a “new” home. The Oregon rain was doing its usual make-everything-green thing. I slowly turned my attention to a rhythmic noise and realized it was the sound of water dripping somewhere in the first floor dining room. Not good. Hmm, no plumbing here, no plumbing upstairs above this room …

Upon inspection I discovered that there was a significant puddle of water on the window sill and more drops were joining the party. Could be a roofing issue, I thought, but seeing rain hitting the glass on the exterior (a common sight on the south side of houses in our region), I figured it must be a window issue. That’s when I noticed the screws. Why were there screws going through the window frame?

This was my second clue (water on the window sill being the first) that this house had fallen victim to a run-and-gun window replacement scheme under the guise of weatherization. The screws go through the window frame and into the house framing because there were no nailing flanges on the windows.

Some homeowners, including the previous owner of our house, buy into the idea that these “weatherization” companies deliver energy savings and windows clear of condensation. However, few suspect the potential long-term water damage these quick-to-install, flangeless windows can cause to their homes. This is a case where shortcuts produce serious compromises. An install job like this would never pass inspection in new construction, so what makes the installers think it’s okay on a remodel?

As you might guess, a window install done right takes more steps and is more work than one done poorly. But it’s well worth it to get the home sealed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properly. This is one of those home improvement projects that produces several positive returns. These benefits include significant energy savings by improving the insulation characteristics of the window itself, which both reduces the cost of cooling the home in the summertime and the cost of heating the home in the wintertime.

Of course, there are other reasons to replace windows: to prevent condensation; to repair damage; to make changes in the design of a room; to go from solid glass to grids, or the other way around; or to get a window that operates easily for opening and closing.

Of these window replacements, one of the most frequent jobs is changing single-pane, aluminum windows for double-pane insulated vinyl frame windows.

When done right, the exterior trim (if applicable) is removed, the flange of the existing aluminum window is exposed, and the flange is released from the house.

There are several different ways you can handle the interior trim of the window. You can either remove the interior trim to be replaced, or you can remove the interior trim and cut the surrounds after the new windows are installed (so they're the proper depth). You can also remove the aluminum window, cut the window surrounds in place to the correct depth, then install the vinyl window so the inside surface contacts the window surround as the flange seals to the exterior of the house. This is the method we explain in this how-to.

JOB DONE RIGHT

Window replacement done right is how I like to describe the technique that Stan Davis of Schar Construction in Eugene, Oregon, uses for his windows. Of course, the window opening must be measured and the window ordered and on site before this process takes place.

Stan starts his window installation by using painter's plastic on the inside of the window to

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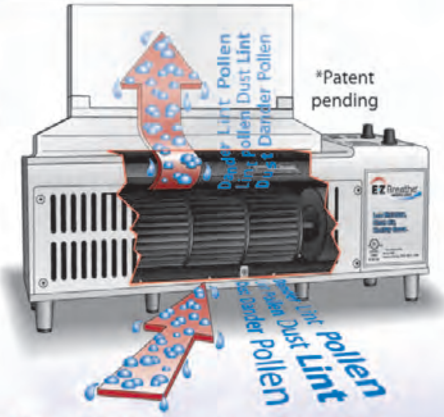

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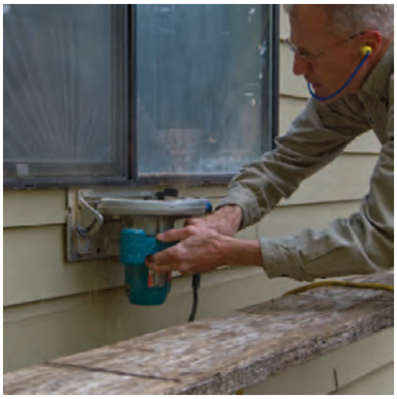
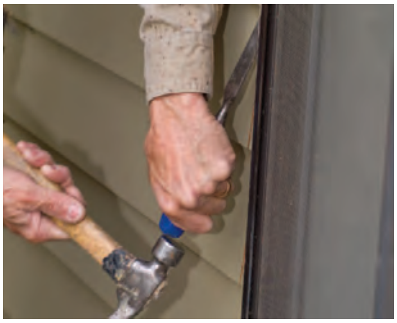
completely seal all the way around the casing of the window.

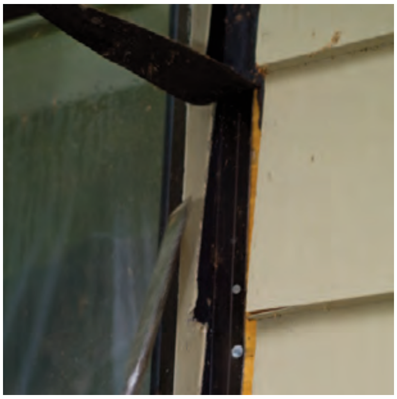
Working on a second floor window, Stan sets up his planking or his scaffolding to give a nice, solid, safe work surface from which to complete the exterior part of the window.

Next, he cuts the siding around the outside of the window with a circular saw to expose the flange of the existing window. In some cases, this operation can be done simply by removing the exterior trim.

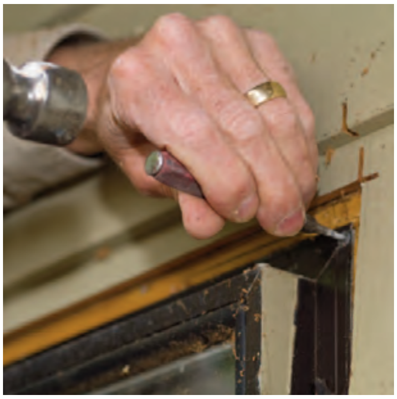


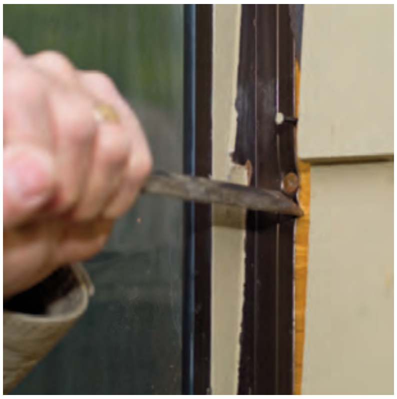
With the siding cut through, simply using the side of the saw base as a guide, Stan removes the pieces of siding using a small pry bar or chisel to loosen the pieces. You may also need to peel off some roofing felt or tarpaper to expose the flanges of the existing windows.





Stan uses a couple of different techniques to release the window flange from the framing on the existing window. One is to use a center punch and drive the head of the nail through the flange. Another technique is to use an old chisel and cut the flange around the nail heads.



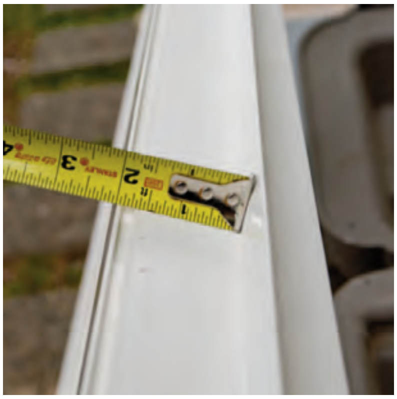


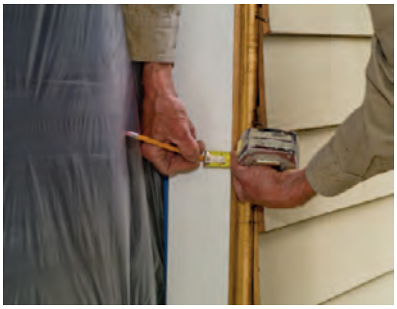
With all of the nails defeated, he tips the window frame out of the rough opening.

He then removes the active part of the window and the screen and carefully places them so they don't fall off the scaffolding. This makes the window lighter and easier to handle.

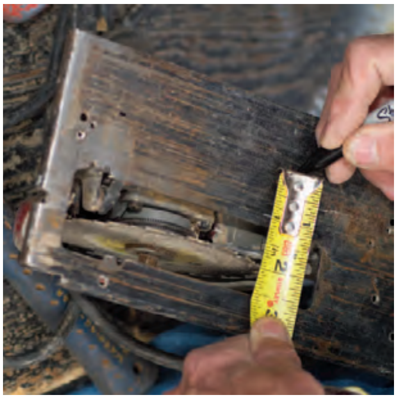
He can then handle the window and carry it down the ladder and off the scaffolding.

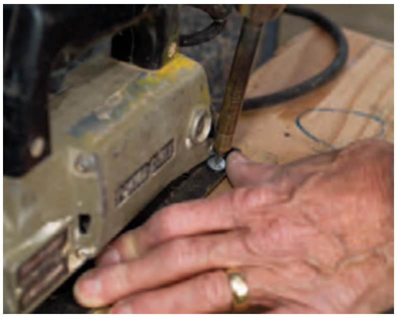
Next, he measures the depth of the window frame from the flange to the inside edge of the window to determine the depth of the window surround. He then uses an “old school” technique of grabbing his tape at the proper depth and using the end of the tape and the pencil to mark the point where he wants to cut the surround.

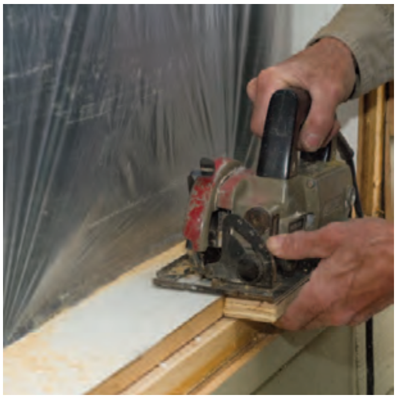




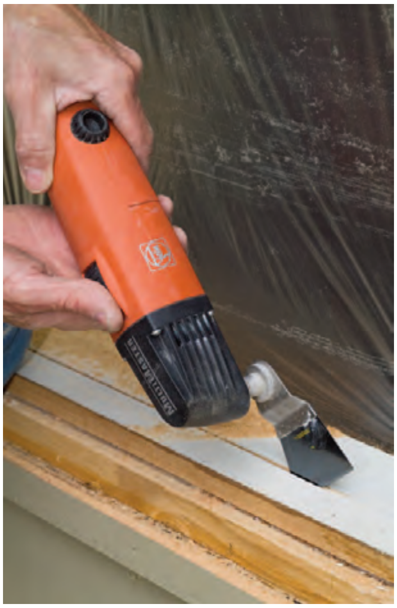
Next, Stan marks the depth of the window frame from the flange to the inside of the window on the base of a small, worm-drive circular saw using a sharpie. He then attaches a block of wood to the bottom of the circular saw along the marked line on the base. The block of wood on the base of the saw serves as a depth gauge so he can cut the window surround.

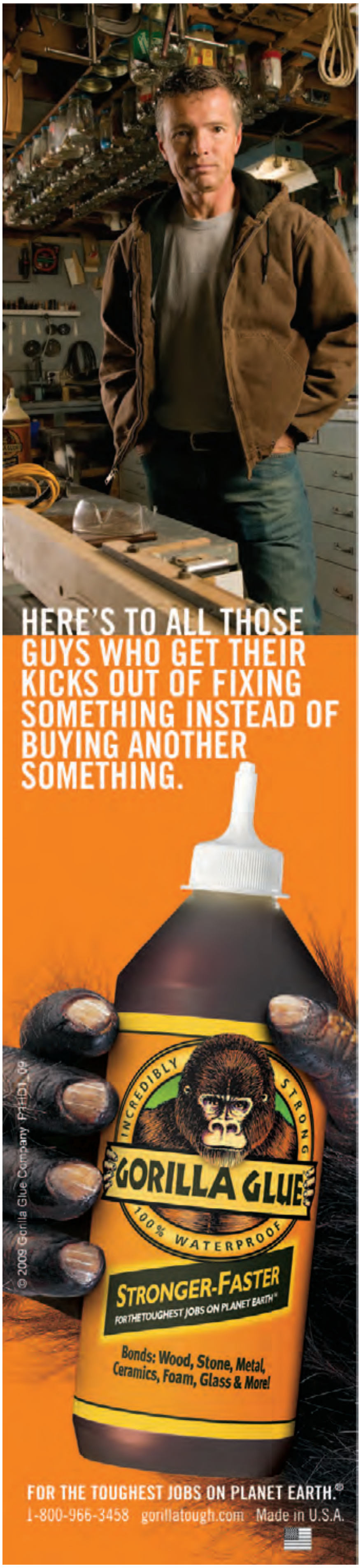






The circular saw cannot reach the corners of the window surround so Stan uses a Multimaster by Fein to finish the cuts.





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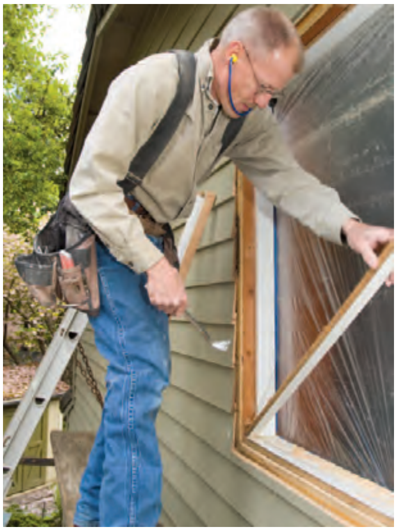
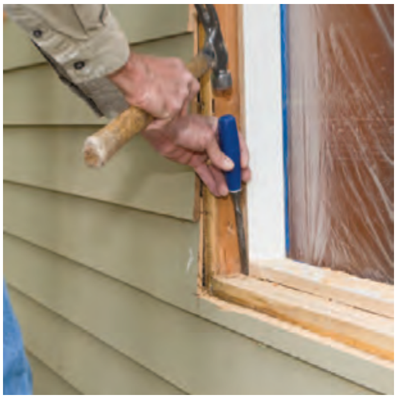
After completing the cuts on the surround, he removes the outside portion of the surround to make room for the new vinyl window.

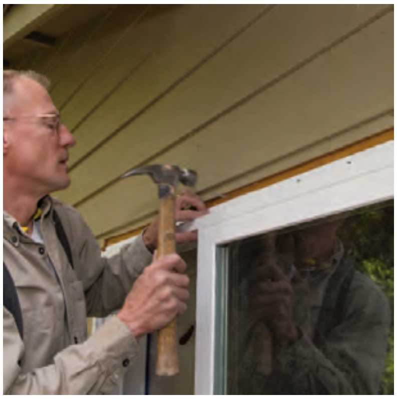


He finishes cleaning up the cuts in the corners using a chisel.



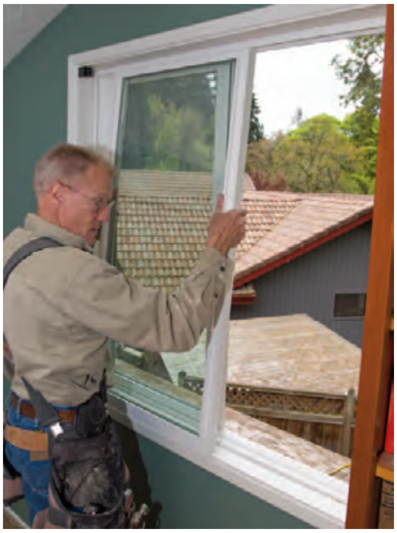
He then uses a small shop vac to vacuum up the sawdust and debris left in the inside the window surround.

After removing the active side of the window and the screen, he takes the new vinyl window up the ladder to position it in the window opening. He puts a nail or two just above the window flange to hold the window from tipping out of the opening.

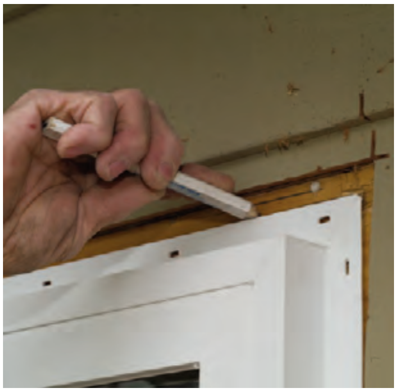


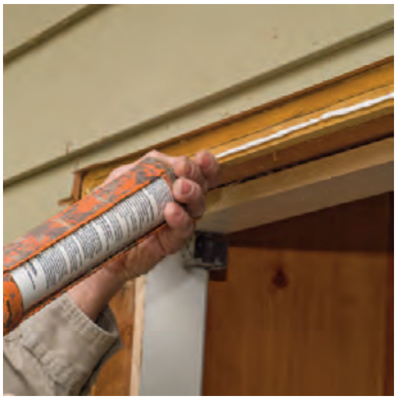
Stan then goes inside the house and removes the masking.

He puts the active half of the new vinyl window in the frame. He then measures the reveal of the vinyl window to the window surround on both sides, and moves it so the window is centered.

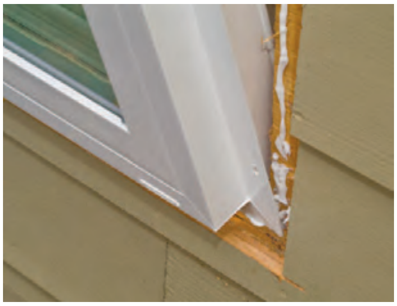


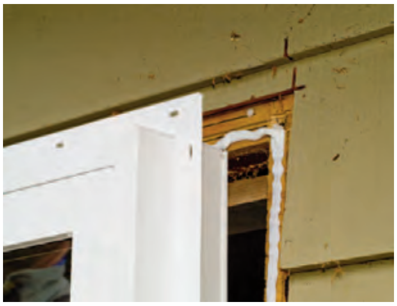
Back at the exterior of the window, he uses a pencil to mark the location of the outside of the window flange. He then removes the window and sets it aside so he can run a bead of caulk where the flange attaches.

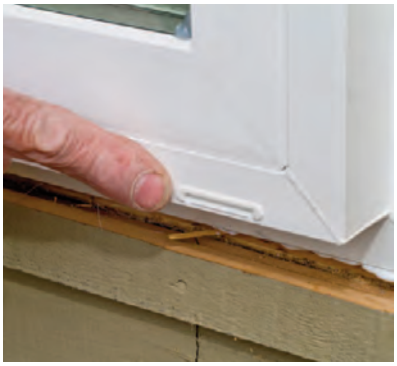




He then puts the vinyl window back in place by tipping it in bottom first, and then tipping it up into place at the top. He double-checks to make sure that the weep hole that lets water out of the window frame is properly positioned at the bottom.







He then nails the window flange onto the framing using the manufacturer's recommended nail spacing. He finishes setting the nails by using a nail set (turned around for more surface area on the nail head) to avoid damaging the vinyl window frame with his hammer.

Next, Stan uses a piece of the exterior window trim up against the vinyl window as a gauge to

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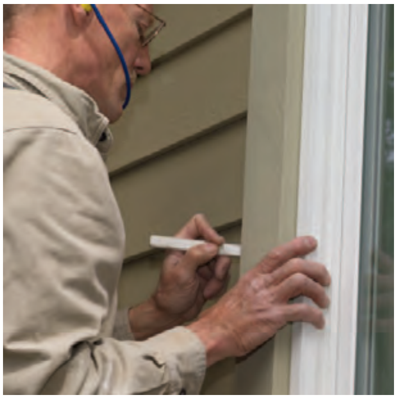
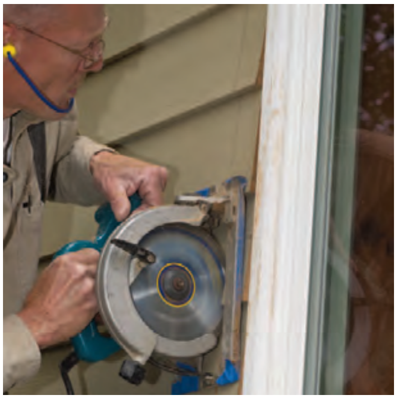
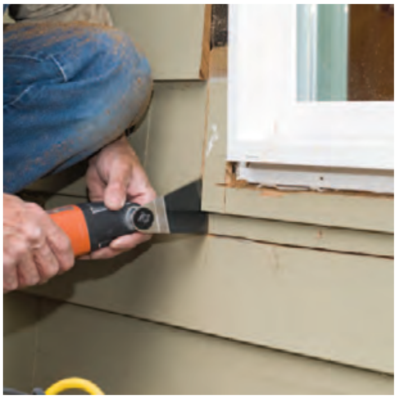
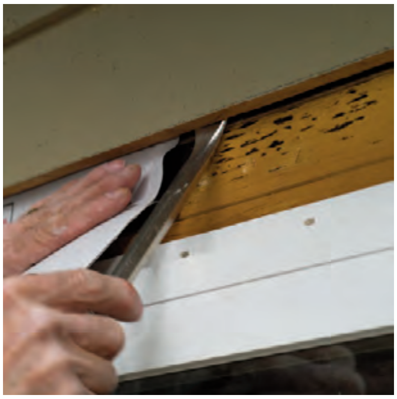
mark where to cut the siding. Notice that he has pre-painted the window trim. Using a circular saw he then cuts on the marked line to make room for the exterior window trim. He finishes the corners of the cuts with the Fein tool as he did with the window surround.

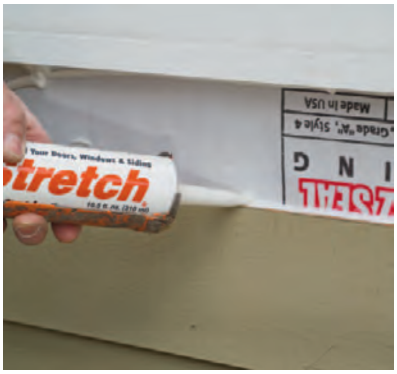




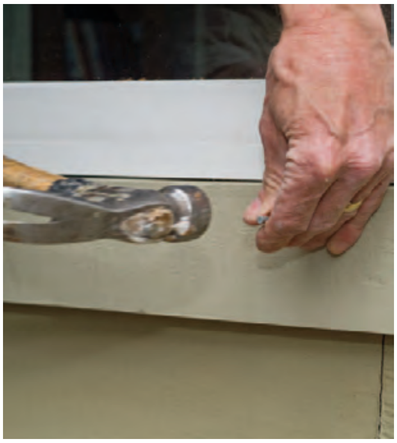


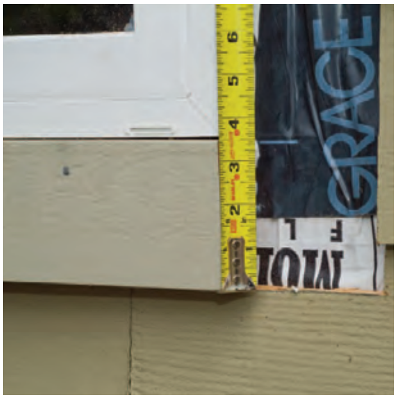
Next, he uses a window seal product. In this case, Moistop E-Z Seal Flashing to seal the windows. He installs the bottom, then the sides, and finishes with the top by tucking the flashing underneath the siding. After installing the window seal flashing, he then applies a bead of caulk where the siding meets the flashing and where the window frame meets the flashing before installing the exterior trim boards.

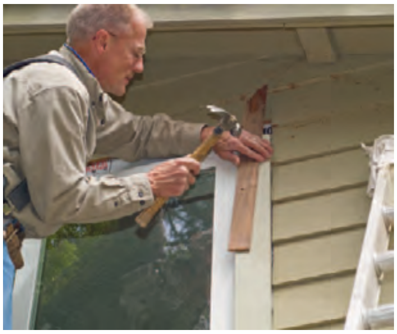




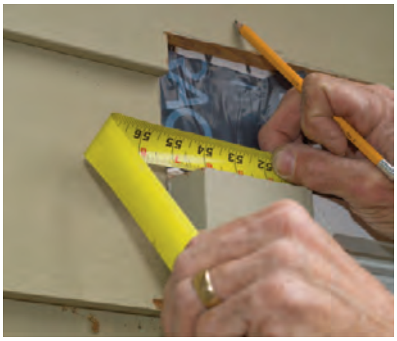
Stan then cuts one of the exterior trim boards to the horizontal dimension of the window and installs it at the bottom using casing nails. He then hooks the tape at the bottom of the first trim board and measures to the top of the window frame, then cuts the two side trim pieces and installs them. Note: When you have a tight fit, it's often a good idea to use a softer wood like a cedar shingle to soften the blows when putting the trim piece into position.



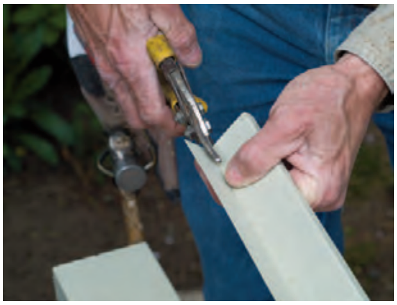


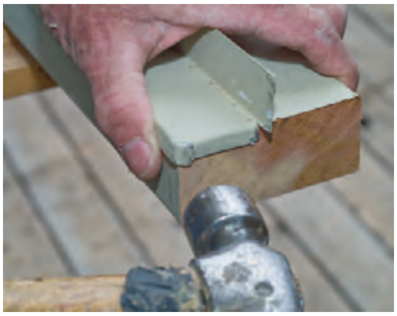


With the side trim pieces in place, he hooks to the outside of one of the side trim pieces and measures over to the outside of the second piece to get the length of the final piece of trim board, which is the horizontal piece at the top.

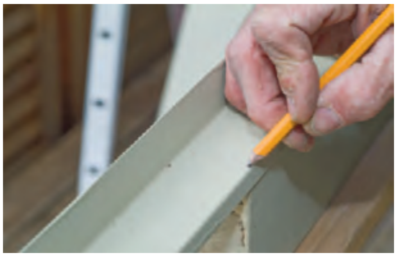


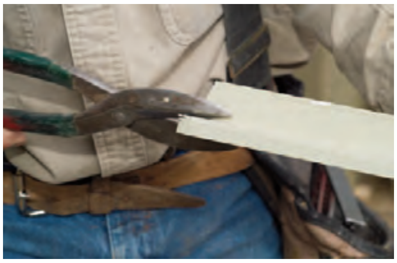
Before installing the top trim board, he fits a piece of metal flashing to wrap over the ends of the board. He puts it in place,

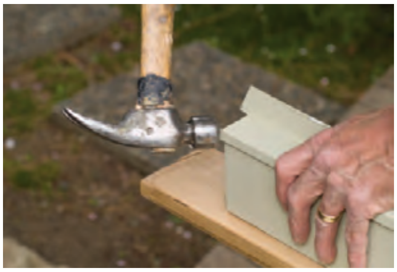




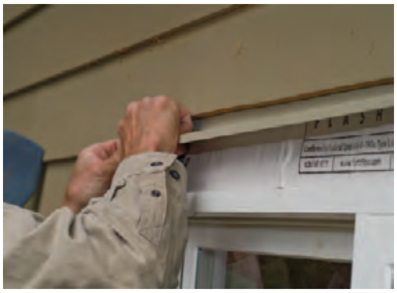
marks the other end, cuts the flashing about 1/2-inch long and shapes it around the other end of the board as well.







Next he fits the piece of flashing into place by sliding the top portion underneath the siding. He then adds caulking all the way around the perimeter where



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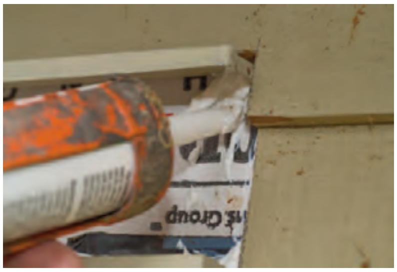
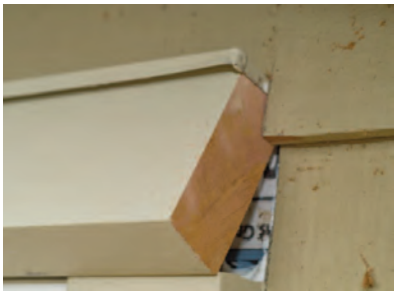
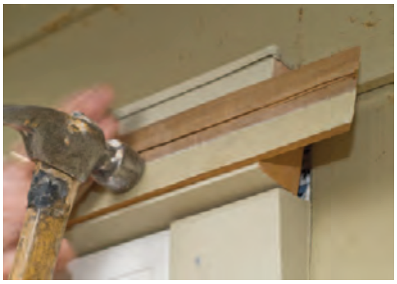
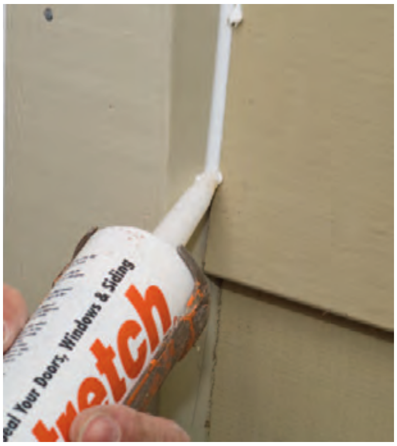


the top trim board goes. He then puts the top trim board in place by first tucking it underneath the flashing and then tipping it into place along the lower edge.





With all of the trim boards in place, Stan runs a bead of caulk all the way around the outside of the trim boards to make the transition between the trim boards and the siding.



With everything in place the interior trim fits properly using the existing window surround and casing, and the exterior portion of the window is trimmed and properly sealed. **EHT**

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PREFINISHED STAIR TREADS

By Matt Weber

Retro-fitting stair treads is the simplest solution for a DIY'er intent on installing hardwood treads over an existing flight of stairs. High-quality prefinished stair treads are made of solid edge-glued wood—not a veneered or engineered material—and can be used to "cap" or reface an existing tread. The primary advantage of using the prefinished stair treads is the ease of installation.

For example, the stairs shown in this article were built of lumber and covered with carpet. Once the carpet was removed, the raw lumber tread was revealed and it was downright ugly. Rather than reinstall carpet, I opted to go with hardwood stair treads to match the newly installed sapele flooring on the upper level. By refacing the stairs with the new prefinished treads, there was no need to remove the old lumber tread. This is a particularly important advantage when dealing with "pre-fab" staircases that are built in a factory and delivered to the jobsite during construction. It is impossible to remove a tread in a pre-fab staircase without completely disassembling the stairs. However, with retro treads, I only had to prep the staircase to accept the "caps," and then install the treads and risers. Here's how it went.

NEW TREADS IN NO TIME— HERE'S HOW TO DO IT…

PLAN OF ATTACK

Obviously, the first step is to asses the number of risers and treads you need, record the measurements of your existing treads and risers, select your wood species and order your materials to suit.

I ordered the treads from www.stair-treads.com, which serves as an online one-stop shop for prefinished stair treads. Stair-treads.com offers solid-wood prefinished treads and risers, in a wide variety of wood species, as well as prefinished handrails, cove molding and more. If you have a need for stair treads, the company likely has it covered, including return stair treads with mitered corners, oversized treads, open or closed treads, as well as RetroFit replacement treads, which are specially manufactured to match 3/4-inch hardwood flooring (see sidebar pg. 53). Standard tread depth is 11-1/2 inches, and a variety of widths are available to meet your specifications.

REMODEL WITH PREFINISHED STAIR TREADS

My first step was to cut plywood reinforcement to strengthen the existing risers of my staircase.

Additionally, Stair-treads.com is not simply a distributor but also the tread manufacturer, and the company will custom-stain the treads to your flooring. In fact, I cut a few samples of the newly installed floorboards and mailed them to the company to match. I then ordered 1-inch-thick sapele treads, which arrived prefinished at the job site with a rich stain that was like a mirror image of the flooring—perfect.

I nailed plywood over the existing risers, which made the riser flush with the edge of the tread. Another option is to cut the bull nose off the tread so it is flush with the existing riser.

PREPPING THE STAIRCASE

After removing the old carpeting, vinyl or other floor covering, the first step is to eliminate any bull nose on the exposed lumber tread. One way is to cut it off. Using a handheld circular saw or jigsaw, cut the bull nose of the tread back flush with (or slightly behind) the existing riser. Use a flush-cut saw or a hammer and chisel to clean off the edges next to the skirt board.

However, like most remodeling jobs, I ran into some unforeseen challenges. The exposed risers were made from flimsy 3/8-inch plywood, which had warped over the years. To provide more solid support for the soon-to-be-installed risers, I decided to beef up the staircase by installing new, thicker plywood in place of the existing risers. In doing so, I built out the thickness of the riser so it was flush with the edge of the tread, rather than cut the tread to be flush with the riser.

Note: If you're reconstructing your staircase in any way, use screws instead of nails to avoid squeaks. Also, keep in mind that maximum riser height should be 7-3/4 inches and minimum tread run no less than 10 inches.

Next, do a little dance on each stair tread in search of squeaks. If you find any, drive a 3-inch screw through the tread at the squeak location and solidly into the stringers. Continue tightening the framing around the squeak in this manner until the tread squeaks no more.

I make it a rule to always pre-coat any paint-grade trim before installing it. It's cleaner and easier to simply touch-up the trim once installed, rather than paint it in place.

Next, I cut the painted risers to width.

INSTALLING THE RISERS

Although made-to-order stair treads are available for purchase, I cut my own from some pre-primed MDF trim boards that were leftover from a previous job. MDF trim boards are relatively inexpensive, easy to work with, and readily available at home-improvement stores such as

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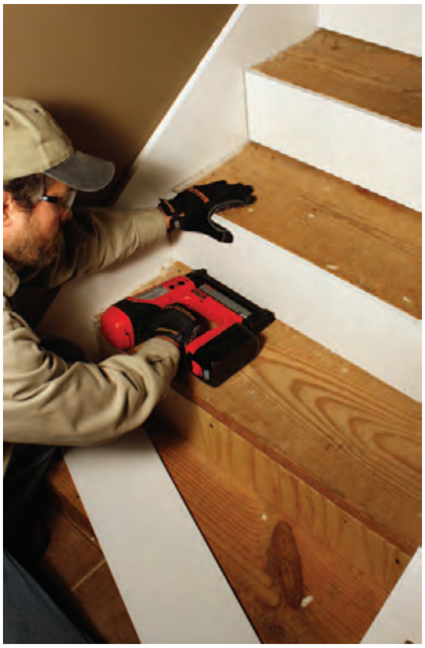
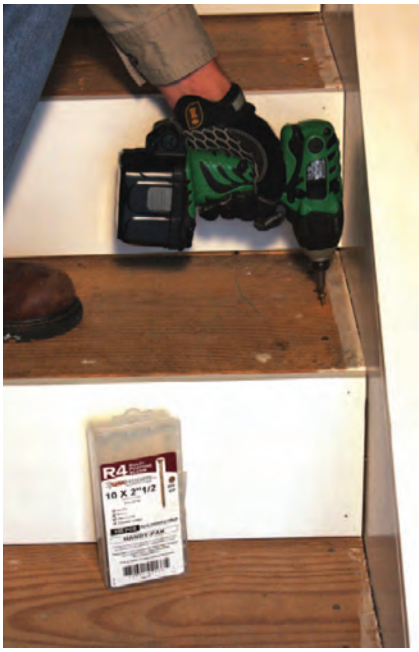


The risers are fastened with construction adhesive and finish nails.



Screw down the existing treads into the stringers to eliminate any squeaks.

Lowe's. I pre-painted the boards with high-gloss white latex before cutting to size.

Cut the new risers to completely cover the existing risers. I suggest measuring and cutting each riser individually, rather than cutting them all to the same size. For example, the site-built staircase I was remodeling was constructed with slight discrepancies from riser to riser and tread to tread. Since the riser sizes didn't match exactly, I had to measure and cut each independently to ensure a tight fit. (This same rule holds true when cutting the treads.)

Risers can be cut to length with a miter saw, handheld circular saw, or even a hand saw. I had to rip the risers to width, which is a little trickier.

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It's possible to rip the risers with a handheld circ saw with an edge guide, but you'll get the most accurate results using a table saw with a rip fence. If you accidentally make an ugly cut, install the riser with its ugly edge down, so the thickness of the new tread hides the cut.

Use construction adhesive and finish nails to install the new risers to cover the existing ones. If you're working with thin hardwood risers, then it's a good idea to predrill the nail holes to avoid splitting the wood.

The prefinished sapele treads from Stair-Treads.com arrived at the jobsite stained to match the flooring on the upper level of the house.

Cut the treads to width with a handheld circular saw or sliding miter saw.

TREAD SIZE TO MATCH

To make installation as easy as possible, Stair-Treads.com offers the RetroFit line of replacement treads made of solid edge-glued wood and specially designed to match the thickness of 3/4-inch hardwood flooring. Each RetroFit tread has a 3/4-inch body that keeps the step height within code. With 3/4-inch flooring, installing a RetroFit stair tread actually raises the step height by exactly the same height as your new flooring. The RetroFit stair tread also uses a full 1-inch bull nose along the front edge to simulate a full 1-inch stair tread once installed.

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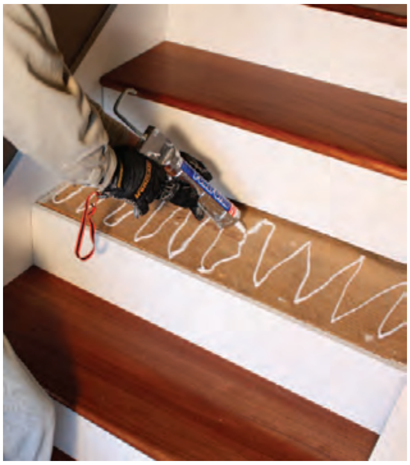
REMODEL WITH PREFINISHED STAIR TREADS

Each tread should be measured and cut individually to account for any differences in size from tread to tread. Dry-fit each tread before installing.

INSTALLING THE TREADS

Individually measure and cut each stair tread to length with a handheld circular saw or sliding miter saw. To make sure you achieve a near perfect fit, I suggest using an angle finder to make sure the treads should indeed be cut at a straight 90 degrees. If the stair construction is a little out of whack, the stringers might slightly flare or contract toward the top or bottom, in which case it may help to cut the tread at a slight angle to match.

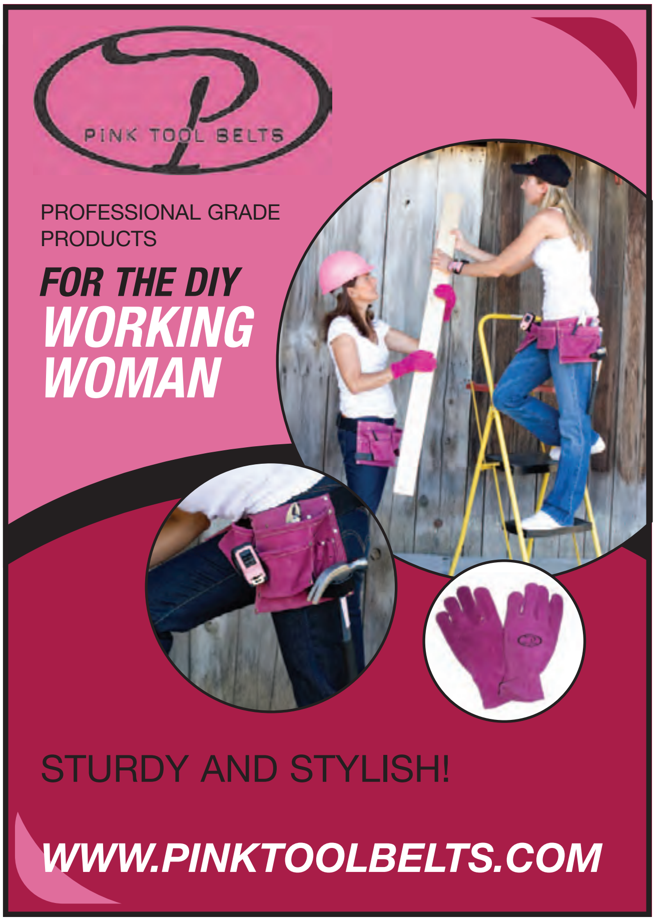
There was no need to rip the treads to width, as the standard 11-1/2 inches was the perfect size to cover the tread and leave an attractive 1/2-inch bull nose over each riser. Use plenty of construction adhesive to secure each tread and fasten with finish nails.



Use construction adhesive to secure each tread.

FINISHING UP

I sealed all the nail holes on the new treads with fast-drying



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wood putty and, once it cured, I stained the putty to match the stairs. I used caulk to fill the nail holes on the risers. I then masked off all the seams between the white risers, white skirt board, and sapele risers with painters tape. Just caulk the seams, clean up your caulk lines, remove the tape, and the job is done.

Prefinished stair treads spare you the trouble of procuring the wood, cutting and gluing-up your own hardwoods, and sanding and staining the treads. In other words, half the work is done for you, so installation takes only about 15 minutes per tread. For the do-it-yourself home remodeler, prefinished stair treads are a fast and efficient way to get the decorative results you want. **EHT**

Fasten each tread with finish nails and cover the nail holes with wood putty. Finish by caulking all the nail holes and seams on the risers and skirt boards.

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BUILD AN OAK AND WALNUT NIGHTSTAND

By Monte Burch

PUT YOUR WOODWORKING SKILLS TO WORK.

Quarter-sawn oak and figured walnut combine to make this nightstand unique and elegant. The design of the stand takes some from both Craftsman and Green and Green styles, along with a touch of "Shaker" represented in the clean, crisp lines. A shelf holds books for those night-readers, and a drawer provides hidden storage for numerous night-time items. The drawer front features a crotch oak center with walnut cockbeading around the edges. Although the nightstand is assembled mostly with glue and biscuits, screws covered with walnut plugs add to the strength, as well as the design.

The construction is fairly straight-forward, but at the same time a bit challenging. Both the quarter-sawn red oak and the walnut were from trees cut from our timberlands. We used a TimberKing Bandsaw mill to mill the woods, which were air-dried for about five years. They were acclimated in my shop for about 6 months. These woods, however, are also available at specialty hardwood stores, or from numerous mail-order firms. The woods were planed to thickness using a Woodmaster planer. When planing highly figured woods, it's extremely important to plane with the grain of the wood, not against it, to prevent tearing out.

TABLE ASSEMBLY

Once the stock was planed to thickness, the sides, back, shelf and top were glued up from several widths of stock, because the quarter-sawn oak pieces were not very wide. Biscuit joinery and TiteBond glue were used to join the pieces together to create the widths needed. Actually, the boards were glued up with an overhang and then ripped, their ends cut to length and their edges planed to create the final widths needed. The glued-up stock is then belt-sanded to smooth up joints and remove any dried glue

A Woodmaster wood planer was used to plane the wood to thickness, including the oak, walnut and pine for the drawer sides, inside front and back.

The tapered inside bottom of the legs are cut using a bandsaw.

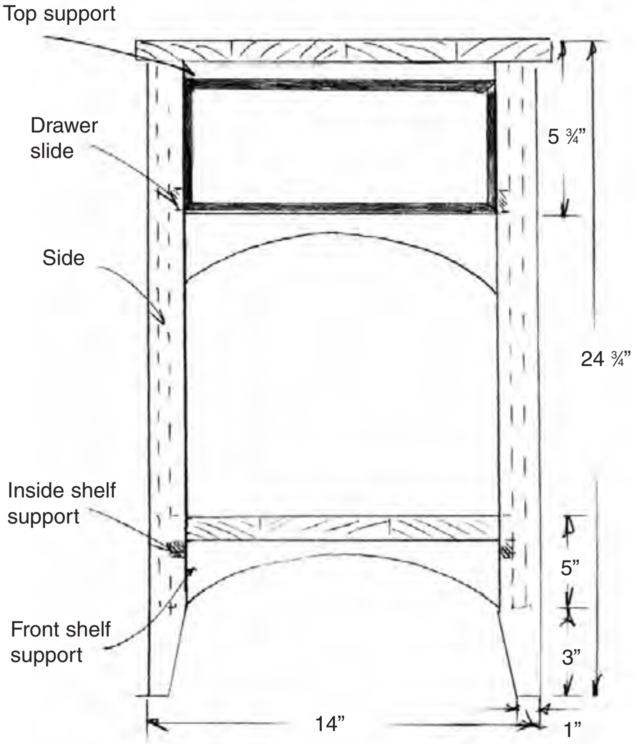
runs. After belt-sanding, the stock is then sanded with an orbital sander, followed by a quarter-sheet finish sander. It's easier to sand the flat stock before assembly, although some sanding will be required afterward.

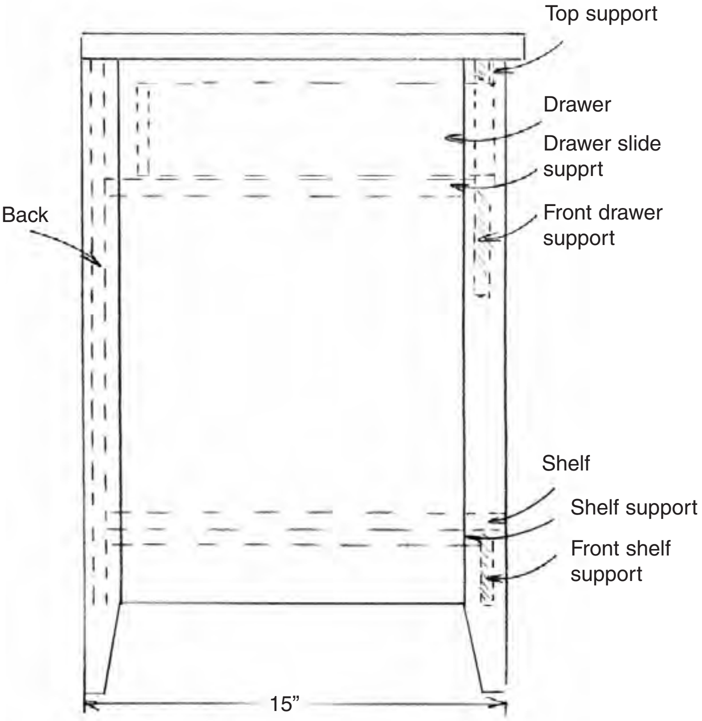
The insides of the legs are cut on an angle. Mark the cuts with a straight edge, or metal ruler, and then cut using a bandsaw or handsaw, and sand smooth. Position a side piece between two legs; mark the locations for the biscuits on both the legs and the matching locations on the side piece. Cut the biscuit slots with a biscuit cutter, and then glue and clamp the side assembly. Assemble the opposite side in the same manner.

Cut the top and drawer support strips to width and length. Enlarge the squared drawing, make a pattern and saw the drawer support and shelf support pieces to shape using a bandsaw. Sand the cut bottom edge.

The sides, back and top are made of narrow quarter-sawn strips,with their edges planed.

Lay the back in place on a smooth flat surface and position a side assembly against it. Mark the locations for the biscuits. Repeat the operation for the opposite side assembly, then cut all biscuit slots. Mark the locations for the top and drawer support strips, as well as the shelf support on the front legs.


Top support
Drawer slide
Side
Inside shelf support
Front shelf support
5 ¾”
24 ¾”
5”
3”
14”
1”


Top support
Drawer
Drawer slide supprt
Front drawer support
Back
Shelf
Shelf support
Front shelf support
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The strips are then edge-joined with glue and wood biscuits, and clamped overnight. The sides are then fastened between the legs, again using biscuits and glue.

Again, clamp the joints overnight.

Now comes the tricky part, fastening the back and front pieces between the side assemblies. Place glue in the biscuit slots on both back legs, as well as in the slots on the back. Stand one side assembly up on a smooth, flat surface and hold it upright using a wooden clamp. Stand the other assembly upright in the same manner and position the back between the sides, forcing the biscuits into the slots in the back legs and back. Make sure the top of the back is flush with the top of the legs, and the entire assembly sits straight, with the legs flat on the work surface. Clamp in place with bar clamps.

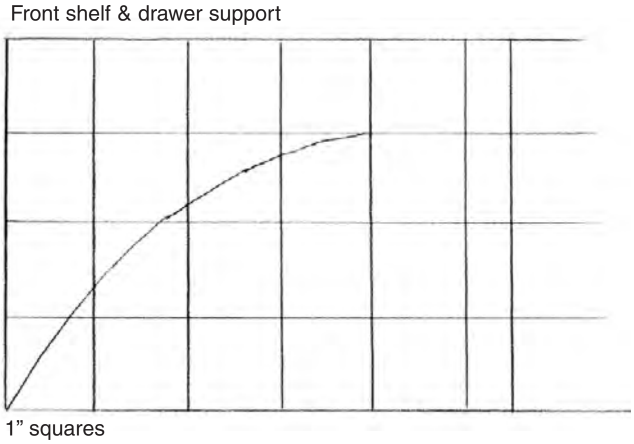
Smear glue on the ends of the top support, drawer support and shelf support. Place them between the front legs in their proper locations and clamp the front assembly together, again making sure the stand sits level. Use a carpenter’s square to make sure the stand is square as well. Allow the assembly to set overnight.

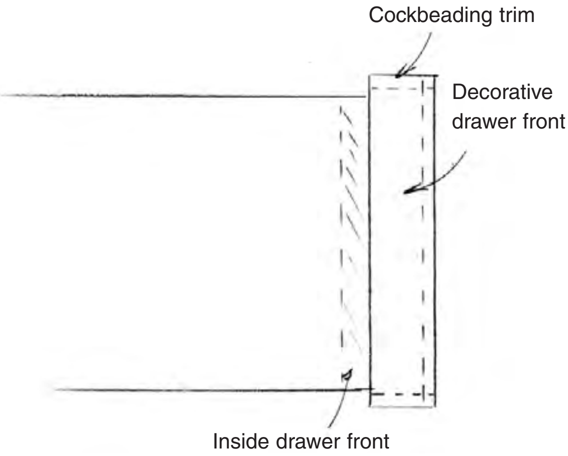
Once the assembly has dried, install the screws. First step is to bore the screw plug holes using a 3/8-inch forstner bit to about 3/8-inch depth. Then bore 1/8-inch holes through the joining pieces for the screws. Drive 3/8-inch Kreg Maxi-Loc fine thread self-tapping screws in place. Cut the walnut plugs using a 3/8-inch plug cutter in a drill press. Pop out the plugs with a screwdriver and glue them in place.

Cut the shelf to the correct width and length, and then cut the notches to allow the shelf to fit around the back and front legs. These notches can be cut with a fine-toothed backsaw or on a bandsaw. Glue the shelf support strips in place to the inside of the side pieces and then glue the shelf in place. Again allow the assembly to set overnight. Fill in any open cracks

The back is fastened between the sides with biscuits.

The assembly is glued and clamped, making sure it is square.





The drawer and shelf supports are cut on a bandsaw.

The top support is cut and the front sections, including the shelf and drawer support, as well as the top support, are glued in place and the assembly clamped.

Cut the walnut plugs and glue them in place.

The bottom edges are sanded smooth.

with oak wood putty. Cut the plugs about 1/8-inch higher than the surrounding wood and then sand the entire stand assembly with an orbital sander, followed by a finishing sander.

DRAWER ASSEMBLY

Next step is to assemble and install the drawer. The drawer is actually assembled with an inside front, then the decorative front assembled and added. Three-quarter inch white pine is planed down to 1/2 inch for the drawer sides, inside front and back.

Cut the sides to width and length, and then cut the inside front and back to width and length. Cut a 1/4-by-1/4-inch dado 1/4-inch up from the bottom inside edges on the inside front and sides. Fasten the inside front, back and sides together. Cut the bottom from 1/4-inch hardboard and place it in the dadoes in the inside front and sides. Use a square to make sure the drawer is square and then fasten the bottom to the bottom edge of the back with flat-head nails.

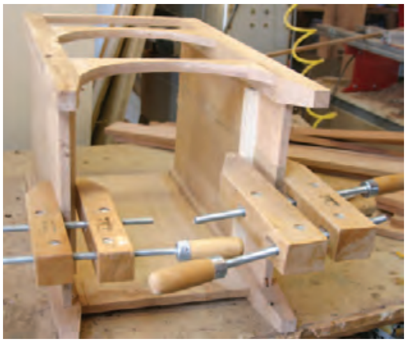
Cut the decorative drawer front center piece to width and length and sand it thoroughly. Cut the walnut cockbeading using a 1/4-inch bull-nose beading router bit, available from Grizzly, in a router table. Edge around the center with the cockbeading, joining the cockbeading at the corners with

Screws covered with walnut plugs provide extra strength and add to the aesthetic appeal. First step is to counterbore for the plugs. Then predrill for the screws and drive them in place.

Saw off the walnut plugs flush with the wood surface.

Fill all holes and cracks with oak wood putty, and sand the entire case inside and out.

Cut the inside shelf supports and fasten them in place with glue and screws.



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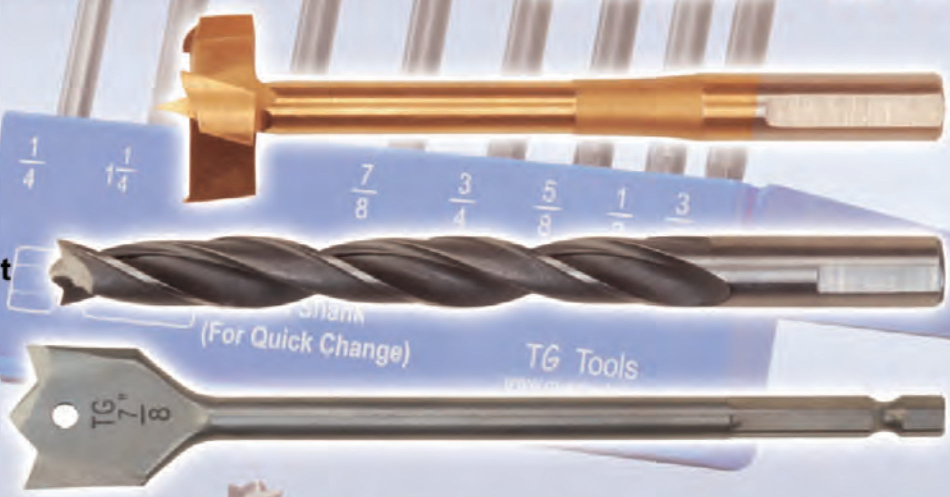

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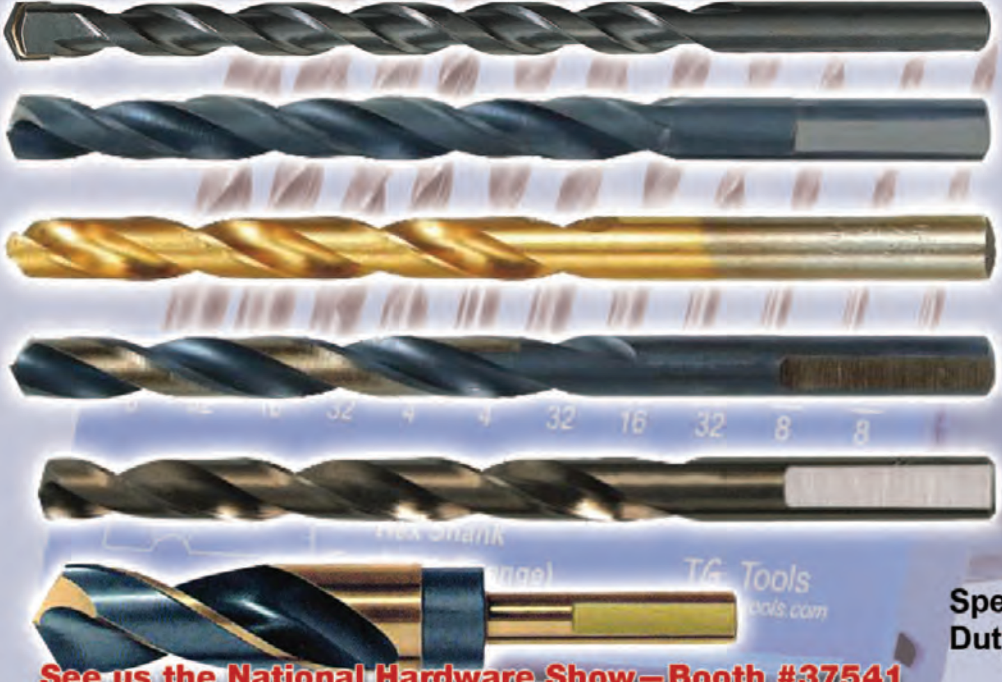

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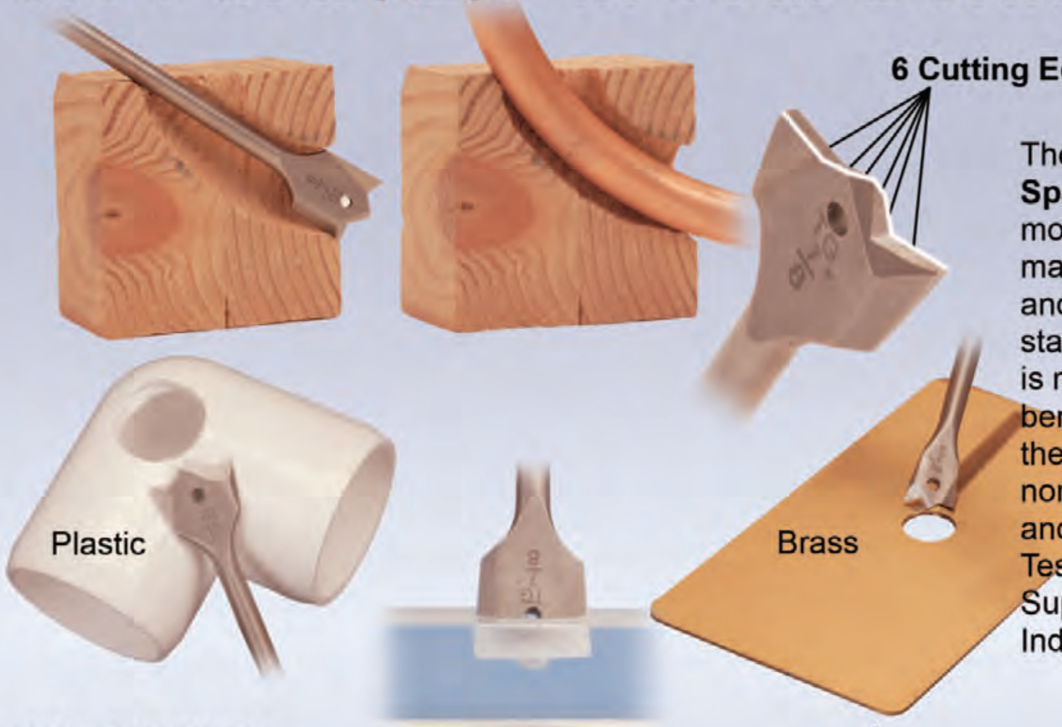

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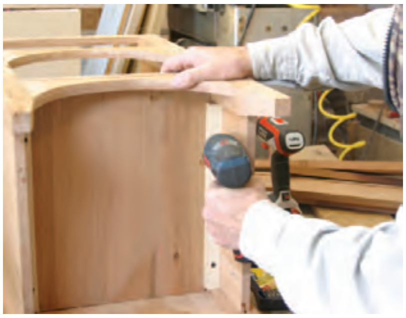
miter joints. Brad and glue in place. Then, fasten the decorative front to the drawer with glue and screws from the inner front piece into the decorative front. Add the drawer pull. The drawer slides are Shop-Fox from Grizzly and are epoxy-coated white slides. You will need to add a filler strip between the legs for attaching the slides in place. Install the slides, and then fasten the matching pieces to the drawer sides.

TOP IT OFF

The last step is to install the top with screws and walnut plugs. Cut the plugs almost flush, and then sand the top smooth. The entire case, inside and out is then given three coats of polyurethane semi-gloss varnish. The top of the stand is given two additional coats of H. Behlen Rockhard Table Top Varnish available from Grizzly. You will never have to worry about water marks on this nightstand top—it's glass smooth and easy to clean. Now, you just have to make a matching stand. You will probably want to do many of the preliminary steps for both nightstands at the same time. **EHT**

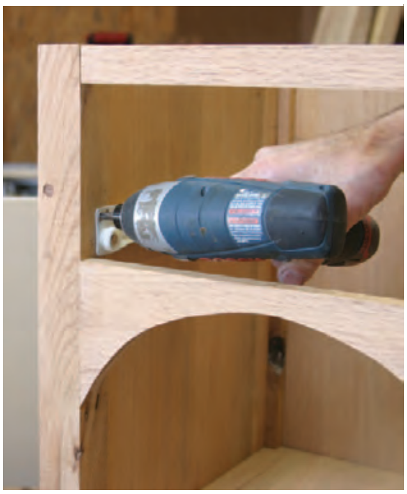
MATERIALS LIST

Legs: 1-1/2 x 1-1/2 x 24", 4 req'd.
Sides: 3/4 x 12 x 21", 2 req'd.
Back: 3/4 x 11 x 21", 1 req'd.
Shelf: 3/4 x 12 x 14", 1 req'd.
Drawer and shelf front supports: 3/4 x 4 x 11", 2 req'd.
Top support: 3/4 x 1 x 11", 1 req'd.
Top: 3/4 x 15 x 16", 1 req'd.
Inside shelf supports: 3/4 x 1 x 12", 2 req'd.
Drawer slide supports: 1/2 x 1 x 12", 2 req'd.
Drawer sides: 1/2 x 4-1/2 x 13", 2 req'd.
Drawer back: 1/2 x 3-3/4 x 8 7/8", 1 req'd.
Drawer inside front: 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 8 7/8", 1 req'd.
Drawer bottom: 1/4" hardboard x 9-1/4 x 13", 1 req'd.
Decorative drawer front center piece: 3/4 x 4-1/2 x 10-3/8", 1 req'd.
Decorative drawer cockbeading: 1/4 x 1 x 36", cut to fit.
Drawer Pull, 1 req'd.

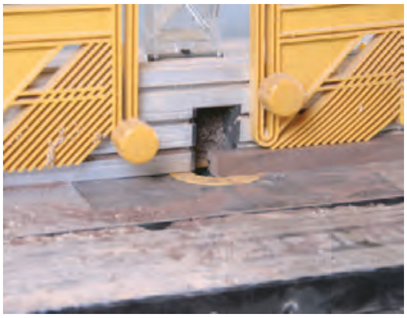


Fasten the shelf in place with glue and screws, through the supports into the bottom edges of the shelf.

Fasten the case drawer slides to the sides with a filler strip added. Fasten the top in place in the same manner.

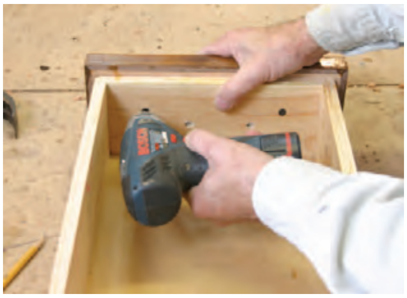


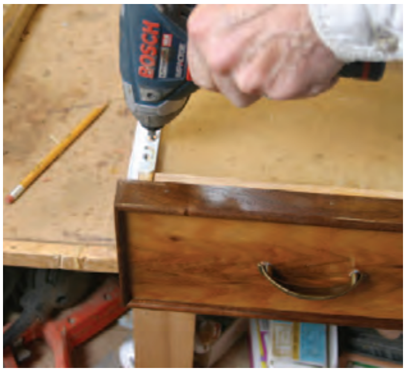
Cover the screws with wood plugs.



Rout the decorative drawer front cockbeading with a router and router table.

Assemble the drawer, assemble the decorative front and fasten the decorative front to the inside drawer front.





Fasten the drawer slides to the drawer and install the drawer.

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Replace a Ceiling Fixture

Light up your life—from above.

By Matt Weber

Replacing an out-of-style ceiling fixture not only updates the look of a room because of the new fixture's appearance, but the manner in which it casts light can also dramatically impact the ambience of the living space. From single-light fluorescents to elaborate dining room pendants, ceiling-mounted light fixtures are prominent features of the interior décor.

Ceiling fixtures range in style from elegant chain-mounted chandeliers with sparkling crystals and candle-style lighting to more modern track-style fixtures that feature multiple, adjustable lamps that operate from a single electrical box.

Regardless of style, the major concern when selecting a replacement feature is to ensure that the box, ceiling and wiring will support the weight of the fixture. For a new fixture that weighs approximately the same as the old one, the existing electrical box will probably suffice. However, if the replacement is heavier, the ceiling box may need to be replaced to support the extra weight.

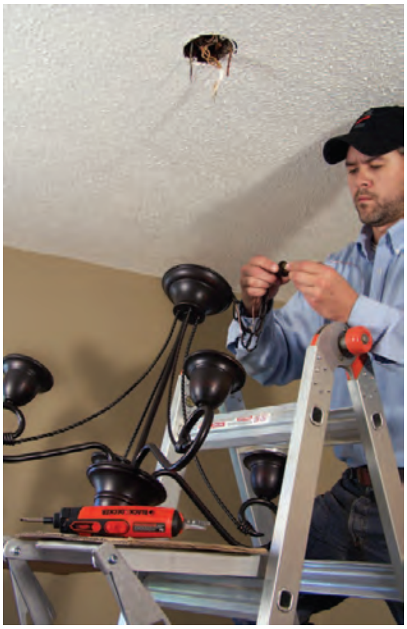
OUT WITH THE OLD

Replacing a light fixture doesn't require an electrician. Following a few simple safety guidelines, a DIY homeowner can easily replace a fixture successfully, although the work should be inspected by a professional. Also, check with local authorities to see if a permit is required.

Before making your first move, turn off the power at the breaker box. Do this by flipping a circuit breaker or unscrewing a fuse. Use a voltage tester to make sure the power is off.

When removing the old fixture, use a work platform fastened to a ladder to support the weight of the fixture while you remove the mounting screws from the electrical box. With the screws out, pull off the box cover and disconnect the wiring. The wires should be twisted together and capped with

The first step to replace the fixture is always to disconnect the power supply. Then support the fixture and unscrew the mounting screws from the electrical box.



Assemble the various components of the new fixture according to the manufacturer's instructions.

a wire nut. To disconnect, just unscrew the wire nut and untwist the wire pairs.

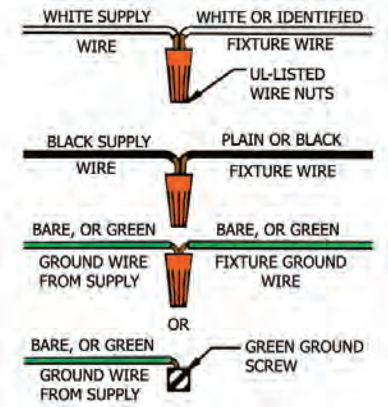
ASSEMBLE THE FIXTURE

Organize the fixture's components, including the canopy, the hanging hardware, etc. Because ceiling fixtures vary greatly in style and construction, so do the associated components and the assembly process. However, any quality lighting manufacturer will include assembly instructions specific to the fixture model, and usually the job requires nothing more than a screwdriver. The cord of the light fixture follows the chain, looping through it periodically to keep the cord and chain bundled. Remember to thread the box cover, the new mounting strap (which screws into the junction box) and any other necessary parts over the wire and chain before installing.

Next, use your ladder/work platform combo to support the weight of the fixture. Ultimately, the height of your hanging fixture is up to you. However, hanging fixtures are often positioned above focal points, such as a dining room table. In that situation, a good rule of thumb is to install the fixture about 30 inches above the table. To do so, it helps to have an assistant hold the fixture in place on the ceiling while you measure the distance and adjust the chain accordingly. To shorten a chain, just cut it to length with metal snips, and then cut the wiring 6 inches longer than the chain.

WIRING BASICS

In modern wiring, individual wires are bundled together in a sheathed cable. "Two-wire with ground" cables have a black wire, a white wire and an uninsulated ground wire. "Three-wire with ground" cables (used with three-way and four-way switches) have a black wire, a white wire, a red wire and an uninsulated ground.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UL-LISTED WIRE NUTS
BLACK SUPPLY WIRE
PLAIN OR BLACK FIXTURE WIRE
BARE, OR GREEN GROUND WIRE FROM SUPPLY
BARE, OR GREEN FIXTURE GROUND WIRE
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BARE, OR GREEN GROUND WIRE FROM SUPPLY
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Connect the wiring by matching the color-coded wires of the supply line and fixture, twisting them together, and then capping each connection with a wire nut.

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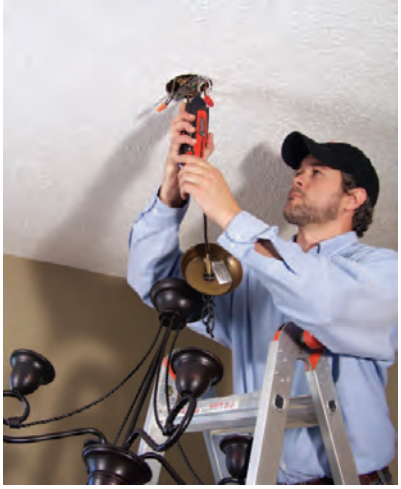
Many light fixtures don't have black and white wires, in which case, look for a rib on the wire sheathing to determine the neutral wire.

Older homes have "knob and tube" wiring. Instead of cables, "knob and tube" wiring is a two-wire system in which individual wires are insulated with white or black treated fabric.

Regardless of your wiring system, the white wire is usually the neutral wire, and the black is the live or "hot" wire. Any red wires are hot, too. The unsheathed, exposed copper wires are ground wires. (Note: In some cases a wiring installation may require a white wire to be hot, in which case it should be marked with black tape. However, just because it should have been marked doesn't mean that it was marked.)

If only a single cable, or one set of black and white wires, enters the box, then the fixture is at the end of the circuit. This is common, but not guaranteed, with ceiling fixtures and allows for the simplest method of installation. If two cables (or two sets of black and white wires) enter the box, the fixture is in the middle of a circuit. The placement of the fixture within the circuit affects how it is wired. If a light is in the



Once the wires are properly connected, screw the mounting plate to the junction box, then follow with the canopy and locknut.

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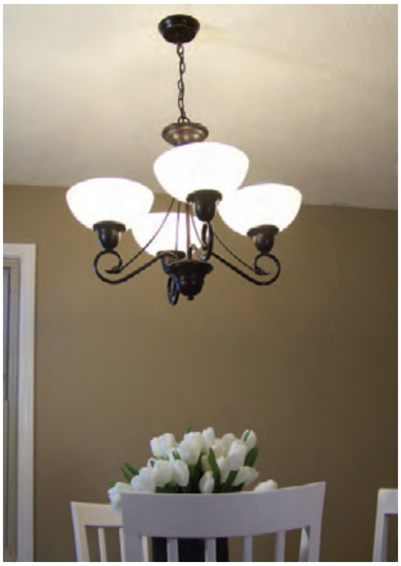
The final step is to install the glass and light bulbs. Balance the light output by using lower wattage bulbs for fixtures with several sockets, and using higher wattage bulbs for fixtures with fewer sockets.

middle of a circuit, you will have to twist multiple wires together.

Those general wiring guidelines should give an idea of how to identify the hot and neutral wires of the supply cable.



The fixture shown is a four-light chandelier from Progress Lighting, featuring an antique bronze finish and etched watermark glass.

However, many light fixtures do not actually have black and white cables, but it's still important to connect the neutral wire of the circuit to the neutral wire of the light. To identify the neutral wire, examine the lamp cord closely; the neutral wire usually has a white rib on the sheathing as its indicator.

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GET CONNECTED

All that's required for installation is a screwdriver, a ladder and some wire strippers. It may help to screw the mounting strap to the junction box to keep the wires close together while you work. Using a combination stripper, pinch the wire in the appropriately sized hole, squeeze to cut the sheathing, and twist and pull to remove about 3/4-inch of insulation from each wire. Match the fixture wires to the supply wires according to sheathing color (hot to hot, neutral to neutral), twist the exposed wires together clockwise, and secure them with a UL-listed wire nut. Install a light bulb and test the connection before installing the fixture. If there's no illumination, you probably have a loose connection, so try again. Once the light functions, add some extra connection protection by wrapping electrician's tape around the wire nuts.

If you haven't yet installed the mounting strap, then screw it to the junction box. Then screw the threaded mounting stem on the chain solidly into the mounting strap. Finally, cover the junction box with the cover or "canopy" and secure it in place with the locknut included with your light fixture.

That's all it takes for a contemporary lighting update to your interior décor. **EHT**

……

Editor's Note: *Special thanks to Progress Lighting for supporting this project. Visit www.progresslighting.com.*

Ceiling fixtures come in many shapes and sizes. This funky globe-shaped fixture has a floral glass design that casts a warm, mottled light pattern throughout the foyer at night.

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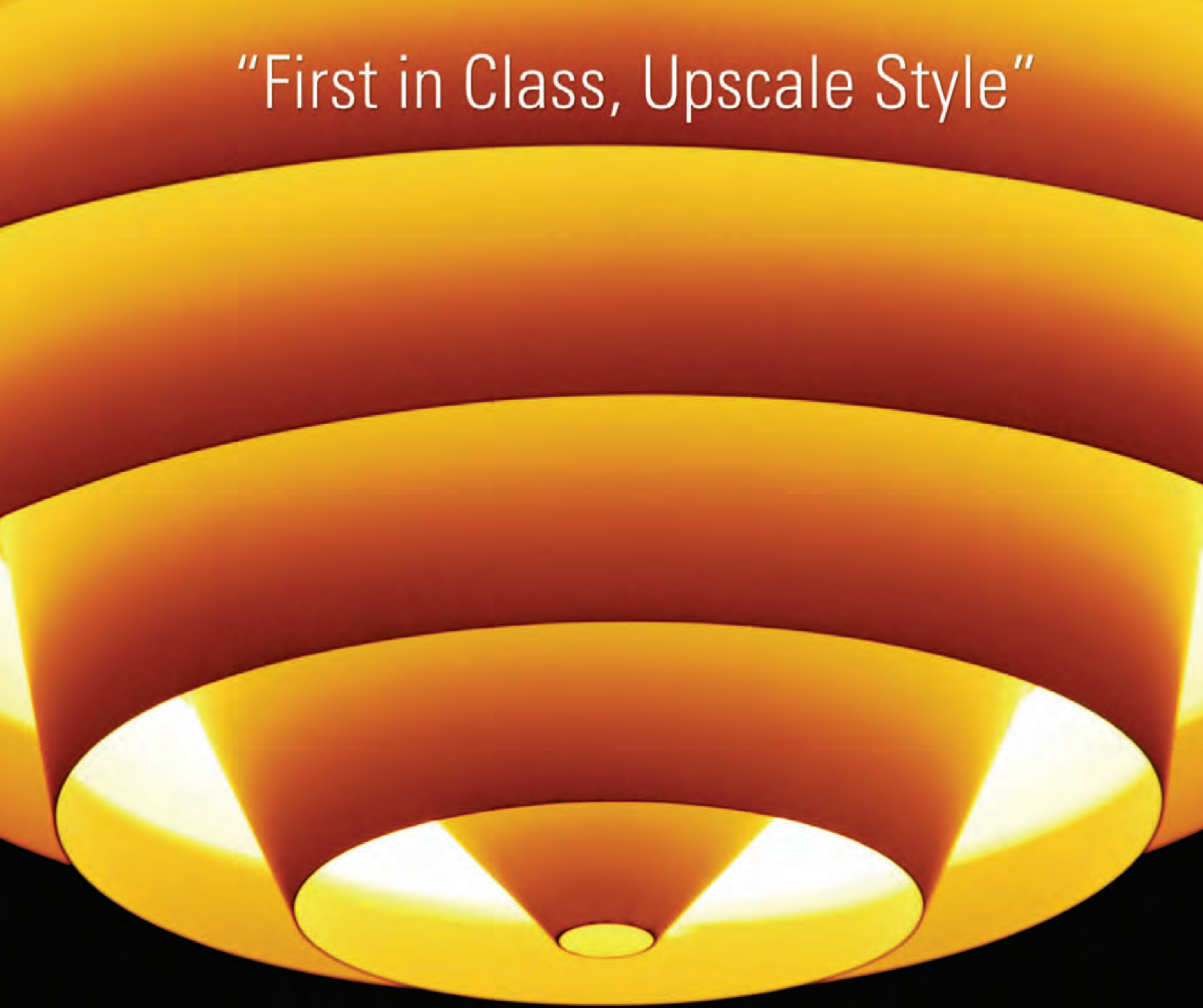

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Adding a PVC Jamb Extension

Alternative Idea for Interior Window Trim

By Kathy Ziprik

Want a straighter and more maintenance-free window jamb? Then follow the steps taken by contractor Steve Roth.

"When I went to renovate an 1800s house, I found that the old walls were not level," says Roth. "They were so imperfect that I had to frame in interior walls to straighten them. Creating a thicker, more even wall solved one problem, but presented a new dilemma: how do I frame out the interior of the windows?"

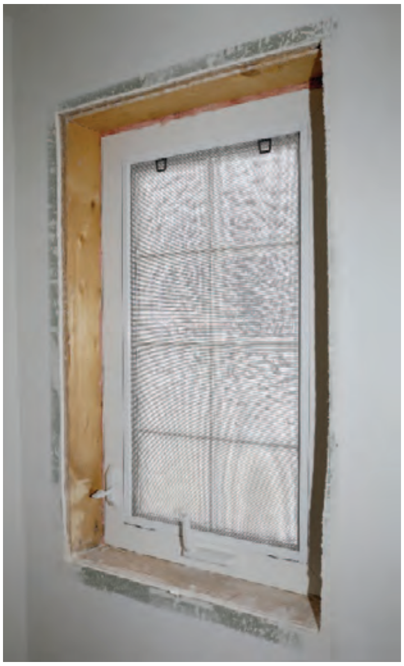
Roth found his solution by creating jamb extensions made of PVC. Along with being maintenance free, the PVC is resistant to moisture and adds a more complete finished look to the interior of the window.

"The jamb extender covers the framing material and what you're attaching the casing to," says Roth. "This simple box frame extends the window framing out to the interior wall surface and adds to the overall design of the room."

Roth chose PVC instead of wood for the jamb extension for several reasons. "These days it's difficult to find clear pine that's not warped or knotted," says Roth. "The PVC I purchased from Fypon was perfect. Each piece is 100 percent usable with no knots, splits or warping. The 1-inch thickness of the PVC board made it easier to nail the casing at the final step. And, most importantly, the PVC complements the vinyl on the frame's window.

"Moisture isn't a problem with PVC either. Some contractors take drywall and simply return it to the window. That's a plain look, and the drywall can soak up moisture, making it a problem sometimes in less than a year. Not so with the PVC … it resists condensation and has an extensive maintenance-free lifespan."

Throughout the house, Roth created a variety of PVC jamb extenders—some reaching up to 12 inches in depth. To create the PVC jamb extensions, Roth followed several simple steps.



Step 1—Clean up the area where the jamb extender will be installed and prep out the space.

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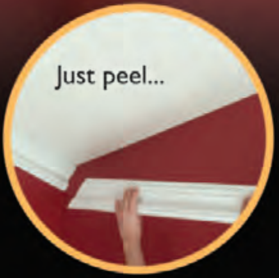

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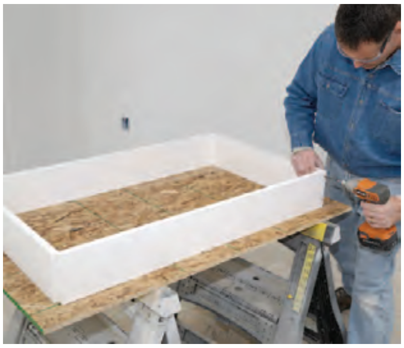
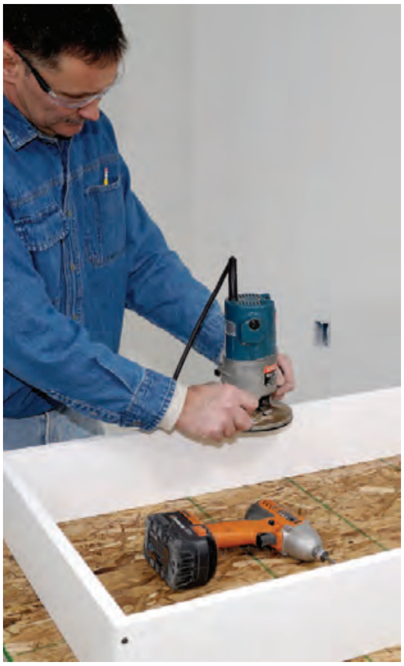
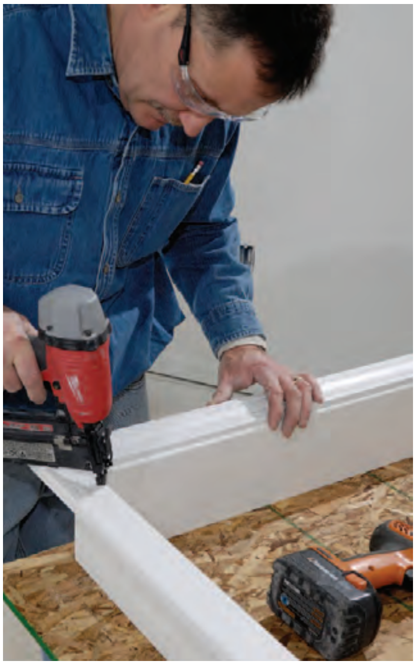


Step 2—Measure the opening space to determine the width of the jamb extension needed. Cut the boards on a table saw to create the box. For this project, the wall space was 3-1/2 inches in depth. Roth recommends cutting the boards and assembling the unit on a workbench instead of nailing directly to the window in order to control the length, width and squareness of the jamb extender.



Step 3—Round-over the sharp edges on the inside corner of the constructed box with a router.



Step 4—Once the box is constructed, attach the Fypon PVC casing to the box area.

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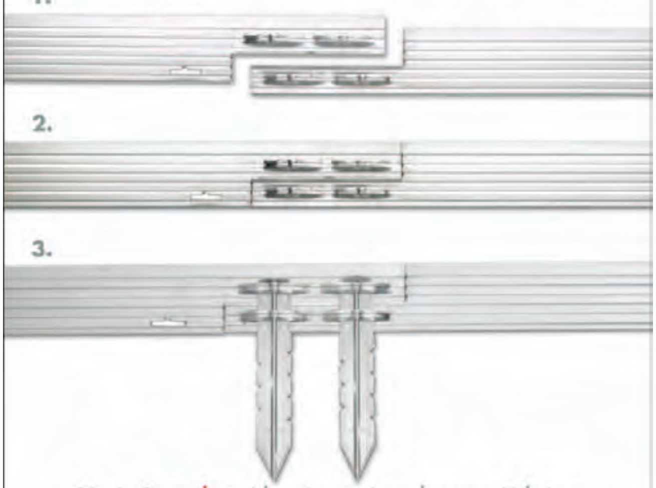

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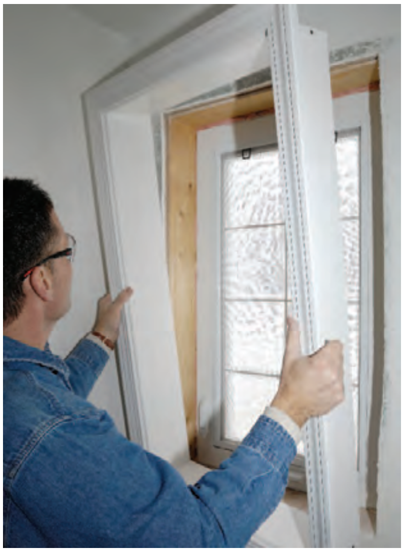
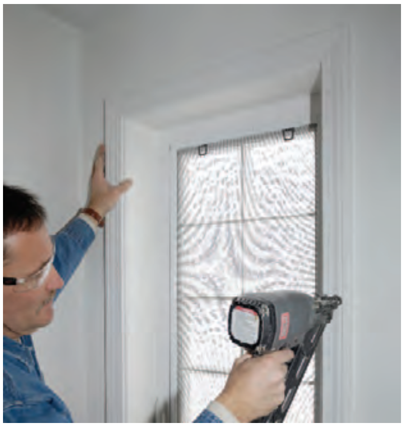


Step 5—Fit the jamb extender into the opening to test for accuracy of fit. The jamb extender should fill in the entire area and extend out from the window framing to lie flush with the interior wall surface.



Step 6—Ensure that the jamb extender is plumb and level in the opening. Nail through the jamb extender into the framing. Finally, nail through the PVC casing like a nail flange into the wall. Finish by filling in nail holes. Now you have a secure jamb extension that defies moisture while adding a touch of class to the room. **EHT**

Editor's Note: *For more information on PVC board and trim products, visit www.fypon.com or call 1-800-446-3040.*

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Upward Thinking

Overhead consoles are a great location for switch control panels.

By Bruce W. Smith

Overhead consoles seem like such a practical addition to a vehicle. They have handy drop-down compartments to keep sunglasses, cell phones, maps, wallets and garage door openers. But after the newness of the vehicle wears off, which is usually about a week, about the only thing that finds its way into the overhead console is dust.

Meanwhile when you get around to adding accessories to your vehicle, such as auxiliary lights, an on-board air system, or maybe those handy front and rear battery cable quick-connects, there's nowhere to mount the switches to control them.

The perfect solution to this paradox is to convert the unused compartments in the overhead console to a switch bank.

Placing switches in the overhead console's seldom-used compartments works great on several fronts: It provides easy operation of the switches; it allows them to be seen at a glance; it places them in a location for fast service; and it keeps the switches out of harm's way. Placing switches in the overhead console also makes wiring them easier because you're not working standing on your head under the dash.

PAINLESS WIRING

Speaking of wiring, there are basically two ways to utilize the overhead console as the vehicle's switching center. One is to go out and track down all the switches, wire and relays on your own, hoping what you get is right for the job. The other method is find a source that provides all the items you need neatly labeled and pre-wired.

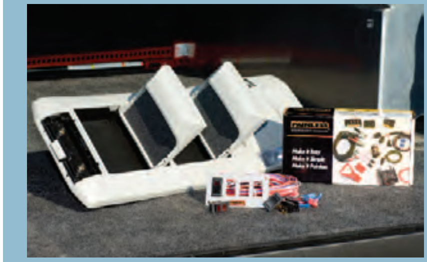
The latter is my favorite, and there's no better one-stop wiring shop than Painless Performance Products (www.painlessperformance.com, 817-244-6212). They specialize in custom vehicle wiring components.

We turned the overhead console in a 2007 Toyota Tundra Double Cab 4x4 into a full-on control panel, using two of Painless' universal four-rocker dash panel kits (#50313) and a six-bank relay kit (#30108) to make the job, well, painless.

Note we didn't say quick: Modifying the plastic console lids to fit the switch panels, mounting the ganged relays, and running the wiring takes a little time to do cleanly. But the job isn't mind-numbing—it's simply connecting colored-and-labeled wires from their switches to the relays and on to whatever item you need to switch on and off.

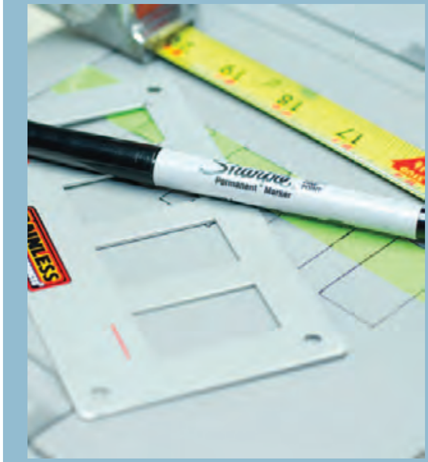
The transformed overhead console looks "factory" when completed. Best of all, now you can control anything electrical by simply raising a finger and rocking a switch, which lights up when the power is on. Now that's an extreme how-to!

STEP-BY-STEP

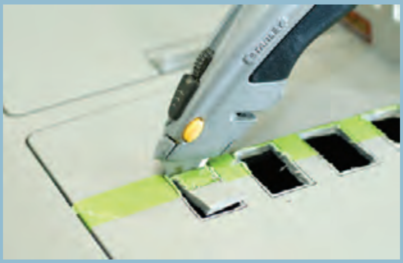


Painless Performance Products' four-rocker switch panel kit includes eveything needed to quickly install heavy-duty lighted switches into any vehicle. We used two kits, one each for the two flip-down compartments, for an installation in a 2007 Toyota Tundra Double Cab's overhead console.

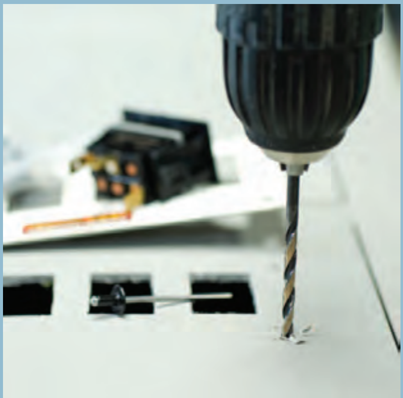
Painless switches come with all the wiring labeled and connectors in place. This makes wiring very, simple. Just plug and power.



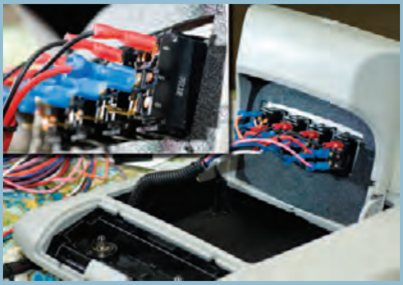
After the overhead console is removed from the vehicle, use the switch panel as the template to draw the openings to cut in each drop-down compartment's bottom face.



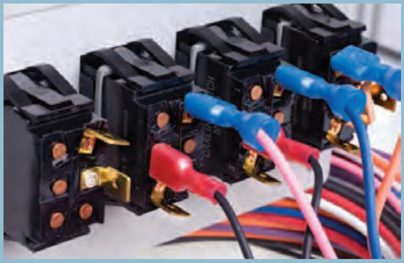
A sharp razor knife can be used to make the openings for the switches. No need to be really exact—the panel itself holds the switches in place. The plastic dividers just provide extra support.



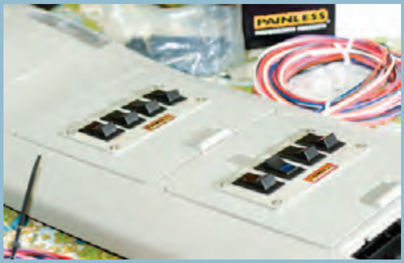
Once the metal switch panel is set in place, drill holes to match locations on the panel, then use rivets at each corner to secure it to the compartment.



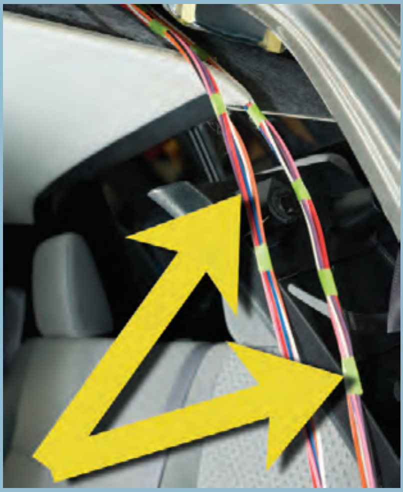
Snap in the switches and then plug in the wires as indicated by the colors and imprinting on each wire. The common wires are red for power, black ground. We tied the ground wire from all the switches into one, and did the same with the power feed to reduce the number of wires leading out of the console.



Wires come marked and color-coded along with an instruction sheet, making the wiring of switches a no-brainer. The wire bundle, wrapped with split loom, exits out the console, snakes between headliner and roof to the rear of the driver's side of the cab, then runs down the "C"-pillar and on to the lights/accessories they power.



Switches placed in the overhead console are convenient, yet out of the way. The compartments still flip down with the touch of finger so you can access the backs of switches.



To make the overhead switch installation "factory," we bundled each panel's wires together then

STEP-BY-STEP

fished them carefully above the headliner until they could be routed down behind the trim at the rear of the Double Cab.

It's always a good idea to run all switches through circuit breakers or, in this case, heavy-duty relays. Painless Performance's relay gangs are prewired and labeled so making the connections is very easy. **EHT**

SKILL LEVEL: MODERATE
TIME REQUIRED: 3-4 HOURS

Tools Used:

- **Metric Socket Set**
- **Needle nose pliers**
- **Razor Knife**
- **Small flat file**
- **Drill & 1/8 bit**
- **Pop rivet tool w/ 1/8" rivets**
- **10', 1/2" split wiring loom**
- **Painless 4-Rocker Switch Panel Kit-Dash (#50313)**
- **Painless 6-gang Relay Kit (#30108)—Optional**

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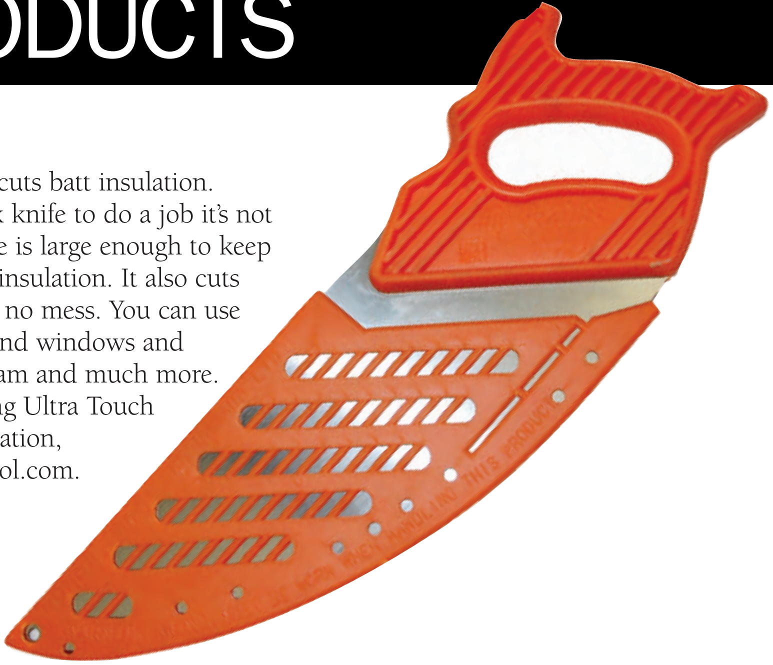

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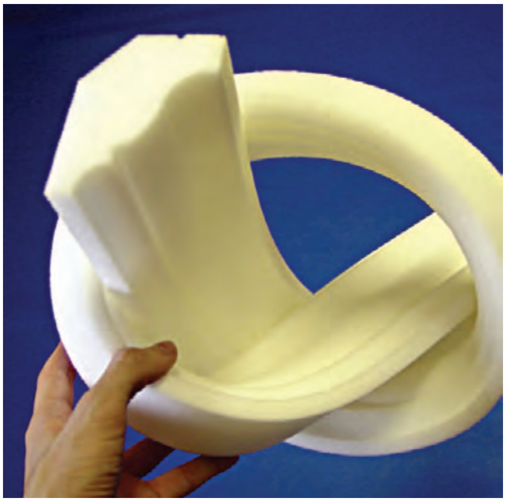

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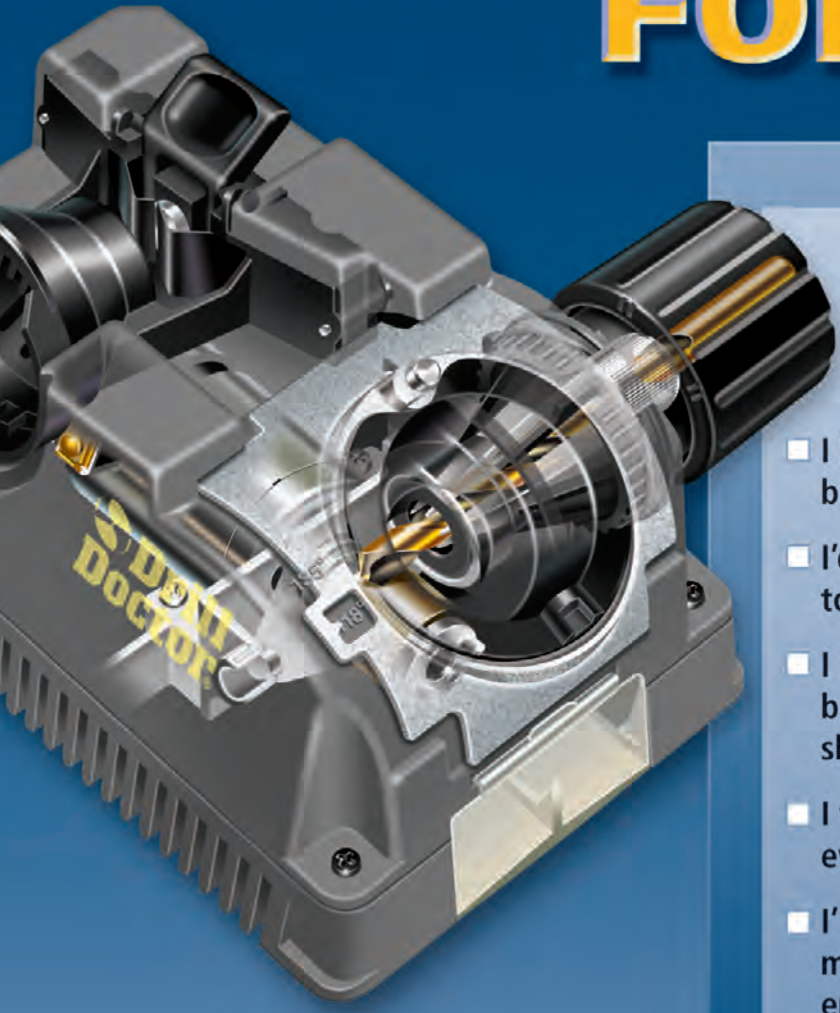

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